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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. QUINN).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 20, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JACK QUINN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend Father James Nock, Senate Chaplain, State of Connecticut, Hartford, Connecticut, offered the following prayer:

Almighty Father, we ask Your blessing on this august body, as we come together this morning to do the work of our Nation.

Let us never forget the potential we share together, to accomplish anything we choose. For with our combined talents, abilities, and experiences, there is no limit to what we can accomplish, only the limit of our own imaginations.

And we ask this of You, who lives and reigns, forever and ever.

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 Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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.

Mr. WICKER 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.

WELCOME TO FATHER JAMES J. NOCK

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

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Chaplain Ford for providing an opportunity for a dear friend and a pastor of mine in East Hartford, a person who has brought home and shepherds the flock on a regular basis, Dr. James Nock from East Hartford.

Father Nock was born in Hartford, Connecticut, of Italian and Irish descent. He is a graduate of Saint Bonaventure University, and he also took his graduate studies at Sulpice in Paris, France; ordained in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris on June 26, 1964, and currently the pastor of Our Lady of Peace in East Hartford, Connecticut.

Father also has served as the Chaplain of the Connecticut State Senate, and he has always brought not only great wisdom in his remarks but a great sense of humor and a sense about the people he serves here on Earth. I want to thank Chaplain Ford so much for providing Father Nock, the parish and the community of East Hartford with this wonderful opportunity.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION SHORTCHANGING MEDICARE

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

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, the message is beginning to get through that the Clinton-Gore administration is shortchanging Medicare. Ill-advised regulations are threatening the quality of health care for our Nation's retired citizens by cutting Medicare \$20 billion below the level set by Congress in the Balanced Budget Act.

In a letter this month to HHS Secretary Shalala, 20 Democratic Senators joined 21 Republican Senators in urging this administration to reverse its decision, warning that harm could come to elderly patients. This bipartisan letter warns that if regulations are not revised, we may see closings of facilities, layoffs of dedicated caregivers, reductions in access to skilled nursing services and erosion of quality of care.

I say to our President, your cuts in Medicare are unacceptable and they are not in compliance with the Balanced Budget Act. It is time for this administration to provide the resources our senior citizens require.

BIPARTISAN EFFORT FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, last year we forced a vote on reform to clean up the way congressional campaigns are conducted. In the words of the respected commentator, Mary McGrory: "To get the bill to the floor reformers had to pry it out of the clenched jaws of Speaker Newt Gingrich by gathering signatures on a discharge petition."

When that vote for reform finally and belatedly occurred, we found out why.



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Every single Republican leader voted against the bipartisan reform, supported by good government groups, and every Democratic leader voted for it. Nevertheless, Republican delay wrote the obituary for this proposal in the Senate.

This year we face the same problem. Here in this House, 196 Democrats have signed a petition to force debate on all proposals, Democratic and Republican, now. Speaker HASTERT and Mr. DELAY say wait until some time in the fall. Every Republican member who refuses to sign this petition for timely action is complicit in killing reform. Join us in a bipartisan effort. Sign now and act now.

HMO REFORM

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

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the record. The other night I gave a special order on HMO reform and inadvertently mentioned the NFIB. In fact, the results I mentioned were from the National Survey of Small Business Executives on Health Care by the Kaiser-Harvard Program on Public Health and Social Policy. I was correct, however, in citing the numbers.

When this group of 300 small business executives was asked if HMO reform were passed into law and would increase premiums by up to \$5 a month, only 1 percent said they would drop coverage and 5 percent did not know; 94 percent would continue coverage.

This cost is in the range of what I think my legislation would affect premiums. This is borne out by the CEO of Iowa Blue Cross/Blue Shield telling me that his plan is implementing the President's commission recommendations on quality and they do not expect to see an increase in premiums from that.

Mr. Speaker, the opponents of HMO reform are trying to scare people about the effects of cost on access to care. I will be happy to share this survey of small business executives with anyone who wants to see some real data.

VOTE ON SHAYS-MEEHAN BEFORE MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, with all civility, Congress is still divided between those who believe there is too much money in our campaigns and those who believe there is never enough. We sell democracy short if we think the voters are not watching our electoral behavior. They are becoming very interested in how we handle campaign financing.

Last year, the freshman campaign finance bill was used as interference in getting Shays-Meehan to the floor. With the discharge petition from both sides, we accomplished a vote. We do

not need any obstructions now. Let us get on with it. Let us restore credibility to the electoral process now, not later.

Shays-Meehan needs to be voted on before Memorial Day. We can do this in a bipartisan way. I appeal to my colleagues, let us conclude this debate in a civil tone. I think it is the best for America.

BREAST CANCER COALITION

(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, did my colleagues know this year alone one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and did they know that of those positively diagnosed women 75 percent will have had no family history of breast cancer?

It continues to be the leading cause of cancer deaths for all women ages 35 to 54. My home State of Florida has the third highest rate of breast cancer. These numbers have caused champions like Jane Torres, President of the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition, to dedicate their lives on heightening awareness.

Due to the work of groups like the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition, Federal funds for research have now increased by as much as sixfold. Eager advocates like Jane, Jill Lawrence, Shelly Greenberg, Midge Blumberg-Krams, Teresa Menendez, Claudia Dobelstein and all of the members of the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition will continue to fight until this treacherous disease is eradicated. Congratulations to them.

A NATION THAT BANS GOD IS A NATION THAT OPENS THE DOOR TO THE DEVIL

(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, another school shooting; this time in Georgia. Everyone is desperately searching for answers. I say the search should stop right here. Congress must look in the mirror, because in America today our students can study cults, devil worship, Hitler, but God is banned, banned from our schools. I say a nation that bans God is a nation that opens the door to the devil and to the problems that we are facing as a nation.

Congress, it is time to allow God back into our schools, and I further recommend after all the technicalities we allow God back into our Nation.

RETURN "THE HUMAN RIGHTS" TO THE DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT

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

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to protest a violation of the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights by the Clinton administration. The Fourth Amendment to the Constitution guarantees that the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated.

Mr. Ramon Saul Sanchez, the President of the Democracy Movement, has been on a hunger strike in Miami for 16 days. He began this protest on May 5 to protest the illegal confiscation of the boat, The Human Rights, by the Coast Guard, acting on orders from the Clinton-Gore White House. The small boat was confiscated for the crime of carrying copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the high seas the same day that dissidents within Cuba had announced that they would peacefully be commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

That apparently seditious document for the Clinton administration reads, everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence.

Mr. President, today is Cuban Independence Day. Bring an end to the hunger strike. Return The Human Rights to the Democracy Movement.

NINE OUT OF TEN AMERICANS SUPPORT CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, referring to the Democratic campaign finance reform discharge petition, which has 196 Democratic signatures, a Republican recently remarked in Roll Call and I quote, "People who sign the discharge petition are committing treason against the party. That is how strongly I feel about that. That is a dangerous position to take and we need to end that talk."

It is no surprise the Republican Party, which outspends Democrats two-to-one, has proclaimed that supporting campaign finance reform should be a felony offense.

Mr. Speaker, our political system needs and our constituents demand campaign finance reform now. Nine out of 10 Americans support campaign finance reform. I repeat, 9 out of 10 Americans. Last year, 196 Members signed the discharge petition that led to bringing the Shays-Meehan bipartisan campaign finance reform bill to the House floor.

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Without that petition process, the House Republican leadership would never have let that debate occur. Time is running out. In order to have enough time for the Senate to pass campaign finance reform, moderate Republicans must sign this discharge petition immediately.