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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Of all the gifts that You so generously have given, O God, we are appreciative of the gift of friendship. For those who support us all the day long and for those whose kindness and concern help us meet the challenges of the day, we offer these words of thanksgiving and praise. May each of us learn to support each other with respect and appreciation, with trust and faith and with that bond of love that stands all the tests of time. May Your blessing, O God, be with us 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 Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILDEE 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. There will be 15 one-minutes on each side this morning.

SUPPORT H.R. 1487, NATIONAL MONUMENT NEPA COMPLIANCE ACT

(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, the Washington Times has reported that the Clinton administration is planning to ban public use on 5 million acres of public land before the 2000 presidential election.

Now, why would this President deny Americans the right to use their public lands? Well, the Times says it is to woo environmentalists.

Do I need to remind the President that not just environmentalists but conservationists, bird hunters, bird watchers and other outdoor recreationists have all the rights to use that public land as well, and they all have the right to pull the lever on the voting booth.

To make matters worse, the President's own Cabinet is acknowledging the recklessness of this proposal. Secretary Bruce Babbitt is quoted as saying, "We have switched the rules of the game. We are not trying to do anything legislatively."

The implication is clear. If Congress does not pass the laws that the President wants passed, then he will make his own laws through regulation, executive orders and policy directives.

Therefore, I ask my colleagues to help stop this abuse of executive power, protect our constitutional rights as Members of Congress and support H.R. 1487, the National Monument NEPA Compliance Act.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, sadly, over 50 percent of Americans believe that with managed care the quality of health care has declined. They feel powerless and unprotected.

The solution? A Bill of Rights.

Our Nation's forefathers were concerned about the government becoming

unresponsive to the will of the people, so they enacted citizen protections and guarantees. Today, managed care has become unresponsive to the will of our Nation's patients. Lack of access to medical care or prescription drugs, inability to determine when medical care is necessary, and inability to seek legal redress on medical decisions.

Enactment of a Patients' Bill of Rights is ripe. As lawmakers, it is our duty. Let us adopt our forefathers' insight, renew our citizens' sense of empowerment in their health care, and pass a Patients' Bill of Rights.

IRS TARGETS POOR SOUTHERNERS

(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, every day there seems to be a new horror story coming out of the IRS. I sort of feel like David Letterman, because the stories I have to tell are so implausible, so hard to believe, that I should probably say, "I'm not making this up."

It turns out that poor Southerners are more likely than almost anyone else to be audited by the IRS. Why do you think this is? Well, of course, one reason is because there is rampant abuse, truly massive abuse in the earned income tax credit program and the IRS is perfectly correct in going after tax cheats who are ripping off their fellow Americans.

The problem is that there is another reason why poor Southerners are being targeted. That reason is more sinister and it is a reason the IRS does not want to talk about.

The poor do not have the resources to defend themselves against an army of IRS lawyers.

So here we have the United States Government embarked on a deliberate policy to take advantage of the weak and vulnerable just struggling to get

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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by, barely making it to the next pay-day.

I think that is wrong.

MANAGED CARE DISCHARGE PETITION

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

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, instead of addressing the crisis of health care in our Nation, we keep finding excuse after excuse to block progress on this issue.

Let us stop the delay. We have a road map for reforming HMO care, the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights.

There is not a one of us who would choose an MBA over an M.D. when it comes to our family's medical health, but that is exactly what has happened to our health care system. We have taken the power away from those who know and care about saving lives and we have given it to people whose priority is simply making money.

It needs to change, and that change can begin today.

I ask every Member on both sides of the aisle to join me in signing this petition to make sure that the needs of America's families are not pushed aside yet again, and to make sure we fulfill our responsibility to working families and prevent them from worrying about whether their children will get the care they need and deserve for another year.

Let us stop the obstruction, let us sign the petition, and let us get to work.

KHRUSHCHEV'S SON WILL NOT VOTE DEMOCRATIC

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

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, last month the previous speaker suggested Congress raise taxes and lower our national defense. Last week, the head of the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee said Democrats have written off rural America in the 2000 election. What could be next?

According to the Washington Post, Nikita Khrushchev's son, Sergei Khrushchev, becomes a United States citizen today after living in the United States for 8 years.

Now, before my Democrat friends celebrate another socialist joining their ranks, consider this. Mr. Khrushchev says, "I will not vote for Democrats. It is too dangerous now for the country."

At a time when even the children of Communists have rejected the Democrats as too dangerous, the American people are preparing another message for them in the 2000 election: "We will bury you."

MANAGED CARE REFORM

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, some of us think the problem is that too many people across America are being buried, buried unnecessarily because they have been managed out of their managed health care.

We gather here today to sign a petition to discharge from a Republican committee stranglehold a bill of rights for health care consumers. We gather to discharge this vital legislation because the Republican leadership has failed to discharge its responsibilities to the American people.

For too many folks, managed health care just means being managed out of the care that they need. Under our bill, physicians will be able to provide the best quality health care available rather than having some clerk be rewarded for denying care with a bonus.

The Republican leadership has served the insurance industry very well in blocking this bill. We believe it is time to discharge it for floor action, time to serve America's health care consumers, not the insurance lobby and the HMOs that are denying Americans the quality of care and the rights that they deserve.

BATTLE BETWEEN CONGRESSIONAL LIBERALS AND REPUBLICAN PARTY

(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, there is a battle going on in this country, a fierce struggle between two opposing forces, each of enormous strength.

The battle is between the greedy hand of big government and the people. Individual liberty is at stake.

On one side stands the defenders of the greedy hand of big government, the liberals in Congress. On the other side stands the defenders of individual liberty, the Republican Party.

One side defends the greedy hand of big government at every turn, every day, on every bill, on every bureaucratic decision. The other side strains mightily to provide tax relief for working Americans and resists the siren call of the Washington politicians who claim that big government is the answer to all our problems.

Does anyone doubt the truth of this? If so, who on the other side will step forward and refute them? Who on the other side will denounce the greedy hand of big government and voice this support for individual liberty through tax relief and against the forces which erode our liberty with each passing day?

INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW VIOLATIONS COST 10,000 STEEL-WORKER JOBS

(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, over 10,000 steelworkers have lost their jobs because Japan, Russia, South Korea and China are violating international trade laws. And after all of that, the White House says, America will not violate international trade laws, and the White House has helped to kill the import steel quota bill.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. There is not one citizen of Japan, Russia, China or South Korea that voted for this White House crew. Nearly 99 percent of those steelworkers who lost their job voted for that White House crew.

I think it is time that Uncle Sam requires everybody to heed the law, but if they are going to break it, by God, we should impose strict import quotas.

I yield back any manufacturing jobs still left in our country.

TIME FOR A TAX CUT

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, time and time again my liberal friends march down to the well of the House to rail against tax cuts for the rich. Ironically, their misleading rhetoric never includes a definition of what constitutes being rich. This is because many of the people they are talking about would be shocked to learn that big-spending politicians consider them rich.

Take, for example, a young married couple earning \$72,000 a year. This couple falls into the top 10 percent of tax-paying households and would surely be branded as greedy and undeserving of any tax relief by the rhetorical rants coming from the left side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, this is demagoguery, it is disingenuous, and it is not true. I would hope it would come to an end. I implore my Democratic colleagues to stop their misleading tactics and join the Republican Party's majority effort to provide an across-the-board tax cut to every American who pays Federal income taxes.

MANAGED CARE REFORM

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we stand here this morning, we know that we are in the greatest country in the world. We have been responsible for finding all kinds of interventions for our health care, and we enjoy the best skill and best knowledge in the world for health care.