

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
Washington, DC, July 28, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted to Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 28, 1999 at 10:10 a.m., that the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 66.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minutes on each side.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING EDUCATION WEEK

(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, as Members of Congress, we should always be encouraged when the private sector tackles one of the social problems facing our Nation without government help.

Such is the case with our Nation's gaming industry. However, it should also be important to recall that a vast majority of Americans who choose to gamble do so responsibly.

In an effort to emphasize the casino gaming entertainment industry's commitment to responsible gaming, August 2 to August 6 has been designated as "responsible gaming education week."

This campaign follows last year's inaugural implementation of this successful program. The idea is designed to raise the awareness of persons with disordered gaming habits and to further educate casino employees and customers about the importance of responsible gaming.

During this week, all casino employees will be asked to actively promote and institute responsible gaming practices within their companies. As a part of this effort, over 250,000 educational brochures on the characteristics of disordered gambling and the importance of responsible gaming will be provided to casino employees across America.

Mr. Speaker, obviously the gaming industry is taking positive steps to improve the gaming entertainment opportunities by helping those with addictive problems.

EYES WIDE SHUT

(Mr. CUMMINGS asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, when I think of the manner in which the GOP tax cut legislation was drafted, the title of the movie "Eyes Wide Shut" comes to mind.

Still, this is no sultry suspense film. In this horror, we will only find a terrible plot that sacrifices Medicare and Social Security and steals \$112 billion away from school construction.

The stars of this movie, the House Republicans, act with a level of irresponsibility that automatically comes from doing anything with your eyes shut. With such blocked vision, it is hard to believe that they have a clear view of the problems or their solutions.

Beyond all the hype, the GOP tax cut is hardly a masterpiece. It is poorly directed, horribly produced, and the Republican actors demonstrate a sophomoric concern for people of our country.

I can only hope that their vision will go from wide shut to wide open and that we will ultimately be able to fulfill our duty of fiscal responsibility and public service to the American people.

LOOK OUT AMERICA, BIG BROTHER MAY BE WATCHING AGAIN

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, hold on to our floppy disks. The Clinton administration, everybody's favorite Big Brother, may soon be following our computers' every move.

According to the New York Times, administration officials are contemplating the creation of an extensive computer monitoring system overseen by the FBI and the GSA that will have the capability of collecting data from computer networks all across this country.

This news should send a chill up the spine of anybody who has followed this administration's actions on privacy issues. Remember, these are the folks who want each and every American to have a special identification number so that their medical records could be tracked by the Federal Government.

These are the folks who wanted to collect a host of personal information about the millions of Americans who receive in-home care from Medicare. These are the folks who wanted to give the FBI the authority to wire tap one out of every 100 phones in this country.

So when they start talking about computer security, be wary. Let us keep their hands off our e-mail.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, Republicans keep saying that the money in the budget surplus belongs to the

American people, falsely implying that we Democrats disagree with that.

For the record, we do not disagree. The surplus belongs to the American people. They are the ones who have paid for it. They are the ones who worked for it. That is why we are listening to the American people, who are telling us that their values is to use the surplus to pay down the national debt and to save Social Security and Medicare.

Republicans, on the other hand, are listening to all the special interests and high-priced Washington lobbyists, who are telling them to waste the surplus on a trillion dollar tax giveaway.

So, Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. It is we Democrats who are listening to the voices and values of America's working families. Because we know this Government does belong to them and they are demanding that we exercise some real fiscal discipline, pay down the national debt, and extend the life of Social Security and Medicare. Democrats are committed to doing that.

If the Republicans really believed the surplus belongs to the American people, they would listen to the voices of those people.

POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN CUBA

(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, while many may turn a blind eye to the reality that plagues the Cuban people, Amnesty International does not. It monitors and advocates on behalf of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in the island of Cuba.

A recent case is that of political activist and human rights dissidenter Nestor Rodriguez Lobaina, who was arbitrarily arrested again on July 11 of this year solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

His whereabouts now? Unknown. The prisoner of conscience Marta Beatriz Roque, who was sentenced by Castro's kangaroo courts earlier this year after languishing for close to 2 years in a squalid jail cell for exercising her human rights and civil liberties, was severely punished by the regime on July 16 for refusing to eat and staying mute in a silent protest for the unjust incarceration that she is subjected to.

These examples of the Cuban dictatorship's cruelties are grave and numerous. Other countries may wish to ignore them. However, the U.S. Congress cannot and indeed we must not.

HINCKLEY SHOULD GO TO JAIL AND WE SHOULD THROW AWAY THE KEYS

(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, John Hinckley shot President Reagan, James Brady, and two security guards with intent to kill. Hinckley also planned to kill President Carter.

Deemed insane, Hinckley was put in the hospital. And now that hospital says Hinckley has regained his health, he is no longer insane, and he should be entitled to and they are granting him "supervised leave." And the Government will not appeal it.

Unbelievable.

What is next, Mr. Speaker? White House tours? Disney World?

Beam me up. Hinckley should go to jail. We should throw away the keys. An America that tolerates assassins like Hinckley is an America that will have more assassins like John Hinckley.

WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR BOAT

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

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, last week Presidential contender and self-proclaimed environmental guru, Vice President AL GORE, treated himself to what amounted to a \$7.1 million taxpayer-funded and environmentally reckless canoe trip down the Connecticut River in New Hampshire.

While on a campaign swing through the first-in-the-Nation primary State, the VP decided to demonstrate his environmental prowess for the cameras by floating four miles downstream and then climbing ashore with a \$100,000 Federal grant check for the local water commission.

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Unfortunately, GORE and his handlers determined too late the low water level on the river might not fully float GORE's boat, thereby presenting a potentially embarrassing political moment to the campaign flotilla. Rather than forgo the photo opportunity, the local water commission, yes, the same group that received the check, was persuaded to release 4 billion gallons of captured water down the river for the 35 minutes GORE was afloat. Water usage cost to release the 4 billion gallons: \$7.1 million.

This was not the first time. They did the same thing in Colorado in 1996 at the Chatfield Reservoir. In either case while farmers pay a premium for reliable water supplies, the Vice President spends their money like water.

Mr. Speaker, as they say over in the White House, "Whatever makes your boat float."

REJECT THE MASSIVELY IRRESPONSIBLE REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on this Congress to reverse course and pass fiscally responsible legislation to provide targeted tax relief for America's families.

Mr. Speaker, the people of North Carolina sent me to this House to work to put our Nation's fiscal house in order, honor our values and invest in our future. Last Congress, I proudly voted to balance the Federal budget for the first time in a generation and I continue to support fiscally responsible tax relief for middle-class families.

But the tax bill the Republican leadership rammed through this House last week is a massively irresponsible gamble with our Nation's future and our economic prosperity. The Republican bill would cripple our ability to save Social Security and Medicare for our Nation's seniors and would prevent us from making needed investments in better education for our children.

Mr. Speaker, the first bill I introduced as a Member of this House cut the inheritance tax for small businesses and small families. This year I have written and introduced, cosponsored by 90 Members, a bill to provide Federal tax credits for local school construction. I strongly support paying down the national debt and providing responsible tax relief for our families. The Republican bill would hurt the middle class and return us to the days of out-of-control deficits and skyrocketing inflation.

INTRODUCTION OF KOSOVO BURDENSHARING RESOLUTION

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member is today introducing a House Resolution titled the Kosovo Burdensharing Resolution. Since the United States bore the disproportionately large share of the cost of the air war against Yugoslavia, my resolution expresses the sense of the House that the United States should pay no more than 18 percent of the aggregate total costs associated with the military air operations, reconstruction in Kosovo, and in Yugoslavia when Milosevic no longer controls the governments of Serbia or Yugoslavia or the Socialist Party, except there is no limitation against Montenegro. This limitation on burdensharing is consistent with the earlier statements by the President, but we need to remind him and reinforce his bargaining power on burdensharing when he negotiates with the European and other allied countries.

This resolution is particularly timely as President Clinton leaves today for the Balkans Reconstruction Conference on Friday in Sarajevo. The resolution also recognizes that Macedonia and Albania bore a significant economic and refugee burden and that these roles should make them priority recipients of aid.

Members should contact my office today if they wish to be an original co-sponsor.

MANAGED CARE REFORM

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have a saying in Texas, "If it's not broke, don't fix it." Well, our health care delivery system by HMOs is broken.

According to the day if you read almost any newspaper, the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 87 percent of doctors said their patients had experienced denial of coverage over the last 2 years; 79 percent had trouble getting approval for a certain drug they wanted to prescribe; 69 percent had trouble getting a diagnostic test approved; 52 percent had trouble getting patients referred to a specialist.

And now to bring you up to date, the Republican leadership announced their intention once again to bypass the committee process and take a managed care bill directly here to the floor. Once again they are starting down a road that ignores the American people. They are letting the HMOs write their own legislation. Once again they are writing a major piece of legislation in the Speaker's office without bipartisan support.

Another Texas saying we have, and I think it applies, is that they are letting the fox guard the chicken house. What we need is real HMO reform, not a fake or a fig leaf.

ADMINISTRATION FALLS SHORT ON VA FUNDING

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the Clinton administration proposed a dismal VA medical care budget earlier this year. It is shortchanging our veterans.

We have heard from VA officials that an additional \$1.1 billion is needed just to maintain current service levels.

Deep concerns regarding the administration's proposal for veterans' medical care led our Committee on Veterans' Affairs to call for an additional \$1.7 billion in funding for the upcoming fiscal year. The new funding being suggested by the Vice President over the weekend will not cover the needs of our veterans.

He proposed an additional \$900 million for medical care. But based upon the administration's own figures, the cost for pay increases and inflation alone will cost \$900 million.

The administration's budget fails to cover the costs of treating hepatitis C, a "silent epidemic" afflicting many veterans, and fails to cover the cost of emergency care.