

about 6 months, and she obviously will be dealing with the whole issue of non-proliferation, ways of trying to deal with the fact that India is now a nuclear power; and we certainly recognize the fact that India is a nuclear power, but obviously we need to have better cooperation between the United States and India with regard to the nuclear issue in terms of security as well, and so I would encourage that.

I am very pleased to see that Secretary Richardson is taking this initiative both with regard to the peaceful uses of energy as well as on the nuclear power issue and what might happen in terms of our national security interests. I think this is a strong indication of further U.S. India cooperation in an area that is very crucial to all of us, and that is our energy resources.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. WILSON) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Donald Carter, Pastor, Baptist Temple of Alamance County, Burlington, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

May we pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for our forefathers who carved out of the wilderness a great Nation, a Nation that has enjoyed the blessings of Almighty God. We acknowledge Your protective and guiding hand upon our Nation during these 223 years.

I request that You give the men and women who are servants of our trust and who represent us understanding of the problems and needs of our country. Give them wisdom to address them. We have sinned as a people and as a Nation. Forgive us of our sins. May these who represent us do what is right, not what is popular, as John Adams said.

May that being who is supreme over all, the Patron of Order, the Fountain of Justice and the Protector of all ages of the world of virtuous liberty, continue His blessings upon this, our Nation.

In Jesus' name I pray.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT 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 REVEREND DR. DONALD CARTER, BAPTIST TEMPLE OF ALAMANCE COUNTY, BURLINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

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

Mr. COBLE. Madam Speaker, the gentleman who opened the House today, Reverend Carter, I came to know him, his wife, Betty, his son David, and the Baptist Temple Church family when I initially was a candidate for Congress in 1984.

Don and his church family and the entire Alamance County Ministerial Association serve their county well, and we are honored to have Don to open our service today.

The bad news is I no longer represent him. As a result of redistricting, Alamance County was assigned to another Congressional District, and they are now ably represented by the gentleman to whom I yield.

I am pleased to yield, Madam Speaker, to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR).

Mr. BURR of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I also welcome Pastor Carter and his wife Betty. In fact, in every community, we find families that we represent. Pastor Carter represents a family in Burlington of several hundred of his parishioners that every week turn to him for their spiritual guidance and for the leadership that they need, both personally and professionally. Dr. Carter, we are glad to have you today and your lovely wife.

I also pledge to my dear colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) that I will carry on the good tradition that he has established, not only with the Baptist Temple, but with Alamance County.

TAX CUTS TO BENEFIT ALL TAXPAYERS

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

Mr. ROGAN. Madam Speaker, we Republicans across the country campaigned last year on the issue of tax relief for working families. We said that Americans are overtaxed, and America agreed. That is why last year more Americans voted for Republicans than

voted Democrat in the Congressional elections.

By now it is no surprise that Republicans actually meant what they said. The House of Representatives under the Republicans have passed tax relief for working families. This is upsetting to many on the left, still locked in the 1960s mentality that demonizes those that save, invest, create jobs, and pay the lion's share of taxes.

Our relief package is fair and balanced. It puts aside \$2 for Social Security and Medicare for every \$1 in tax relief for working families.

It does something foreign to the left that controlled this chamber for 40 years before us. It pays down the national debt by some \$1 trillion, and it cuts taxes so that all taxpaying families will benefit.

The Republican Party is the party of tax relief for working families.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS OF HEPATITIS C

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

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker, the Queens Courier, a distinguished local newspaper in New York, recently concluded in an exclusive study that they did in this edition that hepatitis C has reached near epidemic proportions in New York City and, in fact, in the Nation as a whole.

The Queens Courier study actually does a great national service to bring our attention to what is an often and unrecognized epidemic: Nearly 4 million Americans have been affected by hepatitis C. As a result, there are almost 10,000 deaths every year in this country, and it causes over \$600 million in medical bills in our country. This is indeed an epidemic, albeit a quiet one. This is particularly poignant to New York City, where there are so many immigrant communities.

Now is the time for not only authorities in New York State, but the Center for Disease Control here in Washington, to finally recognize that hepatitis C has reached a crisis proportion. The Queens Courier has done a very important job by calling this to our attention. Now we in Congress have to take up this call and address the problems of hepatitis C.

NETWORKS NOT COVERING GREENSPAN STATEMENTS PROPERLY

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Speaker, today is the first installment of our Media Watch. Media Watch is an effort to cover the stories the networks will not cover, the stories which are distorted by liberals, and the stories which are buried in the back pages for political reasons.

As always, there is a lot to choose from, but I think most people would agree that the way the major networks covered Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan's comments on the Republican tax proposal deserves a second look.

Anybody watching ABC, NBC, CBS or CNN would come away thinking that the Federal Reserve Chairman opposed the Republican tax cuts and felt them unwise.

Well, Alan Greenspan's comments were not exactly as they were portrayed. In fact, the Chairman warned against more spending. Those comments were ignored. In fact, the Chairman said that if the choice were between more spending and tax cuts, he thought tax cuts made sense, and that more spending would be the worst of all outcomes.

Surprise, surprise. We get spin from the networks.

STRENGTHENING AND MODERNIZING MEDICARE

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

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, anyone who has been paying attention in this country in the last year would think, would know, that we have got some problems with Medicare. The program becomes insolvent in the year 2015.

So let us look at this Republican tax cut proposal. It devotes \$792 billion for tax cuts and does absolutely nothing to strengthen and modernize Medicare. The GOP plan does not extend the solvency of Medicare by one day.

By contrast, the Democratic plan invests \$325 billion of the on-budget surplus over the next 10 years in the Medicare Trust Fund and extends it out to 2027.

The GOP plan contains absolutely nothing for prescription drug benefits. The Democratic plan contains \$45 billion over 10 years to help provide our seniors with help in buying their prescription drugs.

There is no question, this tax cut and helping Medicare, improving Medicare, providing the prescription drug benefit, they cannot both be done. Moreover, the surplus, frankly, is not there.

WESTERN SAHARA PRISONERS OF WAR NEED TO GO HOME

(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, the country of Morocco has been in the news a lot the last couple of weeks. This morning, I rise on behalf of 83 freed Moroccan POWs in the midst of the Sahara Desert. These men were originally imprisoned due to the conflict between Western Sahara and Morocco.

These prisoners were released in 1997 by Western Sahara as a goodwill ges-

ture when former Secretary of State George Baker, who was the emissary of the UN Secretary General, visited the Sahrawi people in their refugee camps. Eighty-five prisoners were released and filled with anticipation of going home. Unfortunately, two of the men have died while waiting for permission from their government to visit Morocco.

Last year I visited these released POWs in their camp. You can see these men in the photo around me.

Madam Speaker, some of these men have languished, along with the Sahrawi refugees, in the desert for 20 years. Yet, even though they are free, Morocco has not allowed them to return home to Morocco to their families.

Why? No one knows.

Madam Speaker, I urge the new King of Morocco as a gesture of good will to accept the freed Moroccan citizens so they can return home to their families.

ENACT PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS NOW

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

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I rose just about a year ago to join my colleagues in offering a one minute on a proposed patients' bill of rights. We were discussing this topic in the House because the leadership of the majority, both in the House and the other body, had finally entered into the public discussion on adoption of a Patients' Bill of Rights.

I regret to say that my optimism was misplaced. I am sorry to say 1 year and 2 weeks later, we still have not passed the Patients' Bill of Rights.

Since that time, public clamor for a real, genuine Patients' Bill of Rights has only grown. The public recognizes that, like the first ten amendments to the Constitution, there are real people and real rights that need to be protected. Medical decisions which affect the very livelihood of people and their quality of life must be made by doctors, in consultation with patients, not insurance accountants. Patients must be able to hold HMOs liable, accountable, for decisions that affect their lives and the quality of life, not some travesty of an internal review process.

REPUBLICAN BUDGET PROPOSAL BEING MISREPRESENTED AND MISCHARACTERIZED

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Madam Speaker, if you take a look at this chart here, you will notice that the Republican budget proposal will reduce the debt held by the public by approximately \$2 trillion. You will also notice that the Republican debt reduction proposal bears absolutely no relation whatso-

ever to the rhetoric we are hearing on the other side of the aisle.

Democrat after Democrat, over the past several weeks, has come down to the House floor and railed against the Republican tax cut proposal, claiming that it would do nothing for debt reduction, do nothing for Social Security, blah, blah, blah. But our proposal reduces the debt by \$2 trillion. The Congressional Budget Office confirms this. Not only that, but the Congressional Budget Office scores our budget proposal as \$200 billion better on debt reduction than the Democrat plan. In other words, our plan reduces the debt more than the Democrats do.

How are we to take their rhetoric seriously? How can we possibly have an honest debate, when our budget proposal is routinely mischaracterized and misrepresented beyond any recognition?

All I can say is thank God for C-SPAN.

INTENSIFY WAR ON DRUGS

(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, the Drug Czar said only 38 percent of teenagers in America have tried drugs, and he is all excited.

Now, look, I like the Czar. I think he is doing a good job. But 38 percent is not exactly a number we should be celebrating, folks.

Let us tell it like it is: Drugs account for 80 percent of all crime, 70 percent of all murder, 50 percent of all healthcare costs, and heroin and cocaine is as easy to get as aspirin in every city in America, and it all comes across the border. Our borders are wide open and our eyes are wide shut.

Beam me up. We do not have a war on drugs going on; we have a propaganda game going on in America.

THE LAKE TAHOE ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMIT

(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, today I rise to pay tribute to Lake Tahoe. Mark Twain once said, as he described Lake Tahoe, it was "the fairest picture the whole Earth afforded."

With an estimated 30 percent of the trees and forests surrounding Lake Tahoe dead or dying, and the lake losing almost a foot of clarity a year, many environmental changes must be made to ensure that we pass on to our children the same wonderful gift of nature in the same pristine condition in which we found it.

A very important first step in this battle was taken when we hosted the Lake Tahoe Environmental Summit in July of 1997. As a result of these meetings \$48 million in Federal funds were