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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. HEFLEY).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 23, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOEL HEFLEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

Give us we pray, O gracious God, the vision to see Your will for righteousness in our world and give us attentive hearts to see the need for reconciliation and respect in our communities and in our institutions. We pray that Your good spirit will enlighten us with love in our own lives so that we will be the people You would have us be and do those works of justice that benefit every person. As we are open to Your spirit and armed with Your grace, may we then be empowered to be Your people in our daily lives. Bless us, O God, this day and every day, we pray. 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 gentlewoman from Idaho (Mrs.

CHENOWETH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. CHENOWETH 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 PRO TEMPORE

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

WHO IS TO BLAME FOR DO-NOTHING CONGRESS?

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

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the distinguished minority leaders of both the House and the other body for settling what to me has long been a confusing issue.

In spite of all the legislation the Republican Congress has passed so far, the Social Security lockbox, tax relief, and debt reduction, the Ed-Flex bill, and the military readiness bill, to name just a few, we have listened for months to Democrats bluster about the do-nothing Congress.

When I picked up my copy of The Hill yesterday, I finally began to understand what they mean by a do-nothing Congress. They mean themselves. On the front page, the distinguished minority leader of the other body proclaimed his disappointment that the first session of the 106th Congress was not more productive, while only a few lines of newsprint away the distinguished minority leader of the House claimed that the Democrats have dominated the Congressional agenda since 1994.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the Democrats are in control and nothing is being done, then I ask the Members, who is to blame?

GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, for 5 months many of us in this body have urged the Republican leadership to help us enact common-sense gun safety measures that will keep guns out of the hands of kids and criminals. But at every turn we have been stalled and stymied, we have been told that we are rushing, that we need to wait.

Waiting means more lives are lost. Every day that passes takes a toll of 13 children, 13 youngsters killed every day by guns. Hundreds of children have been killed just in the time since the tragedy at Columbine High School.

Today I join my colleagues in continuing to pay tribute to some of those children and urge the Congressional leadership to pass gun safety legislation in their memory.

Paulette Peak, age 8, killed by gunfire on July 31, 1999, Chicago Illinois;

Reginald McClaine, age 16, killed by gunfire on August 4, 1999, Bronx, New York;

Aaron Thomas, age 16, killed by gunfire on August 5, 1999, St. Louis, Missouri;

Tamara Seline, age 17, killed by gunfire on August 6, 1999, West Palm Beach, Florida.

GUN CONTROL LAWS

(Mrs. CHENOWETH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, most people who know me know that I

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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am never really inclined to praise The Washington Post. But The Washington Post, to their credit, ran a very fine story this past Sunday about gun control that surprised me quite a bit.

Apparently, my friends on the other side of the aisle missed that article or have decided to merely misrepresent this whole issue. The article points out that none of the gun control bills debated by Congress this year if passed into law would have stopped any of the recent shootings which have taken so many of our children's lives.

The reason is quite simple. All of the killers had either bought their guns legally or found an easy way to get around State and Federal laws. The article went through each shooting and each killer, the killers at Columbine; Mike Barton in Atlanta; Buford Furrow, Jr., in Los Angeles; Benjamin Nathaniel Smith in Illinois and Indiana; and Larry Geen Ashbrook in Fort Worth, Texas; and it traced the steps through which the purchase of the guns occurred before those shootings.

Again, no gun control laws so passionately advocated by those on the other side would have had any impact on these killers.

CAPTIVE ELEPHANT ACCIDENT PREVENTION ACT

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

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, first of all, to thank game show host Bob Barker for coming to Washington, D.C. in support of the bill I am introducing today and sorry that he had to have emergency surgery. We all wish him well as he recovers from this.

Today I am introducing the Captive Elephant Accident Prevention Act, H.R. 2929, to make circuses more humane for animals and safer for spectators. I am not interested in seeing the circus industry unduly hindered or encumbered. My bill is a practical, reasonable bill that addresses a fundamental wrong in the entertainment industry.

The problem is that we have to break the will of wild beasts, big beasts that are 10 feet tall, weigh several tons, in order for them to perform stunts at circuses. They use high-powered electric prods. They tie them up. And we can see that when an animal goes wild, as this one did in Honolulu, that the only way to stop them from injuring people is to shoot them. That is what happened in this case where an animal had 57 rounds shot into him before he was brought down.

Animals like elephants are not horses or dogs. They cannot be trained for those purposes. I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring H.R. 2929.

FALN TERRORISTS RELEASED FROM PRISON

(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, it is the practice in our Nation that victims of crime and their families be consulted before criminals who have perpetrated the crimes against them are released from prison.

Well, it just so happens that the victims of the FALN terrorist attacks were never even consulted; they were never even notified that these terrorists were about to be set free from prison, another injustice against the American people and victims of crime by our President.

Yet, the Clinton-Gore Administration took months talking to the terrorists and their representatives as they made their decision. We know that the First Lady was consulted. She first agreed, and then she said she changed her mind. We are told that the Vice President is consulted about everything. I wonder what his response or his role was in granting the terrorists their freedom.

Why were not 139 bombings, 6 people killed, dozens maimed enough to keep terrorists off of our streets? The American people and the victims of crime deserve answers to these questions, not silence through executive privilege.

CONGRESS TURNS OTHER CHEEK

(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, FBI agents testified that the Justice Department blocked their investigation of illegal campaign contributions to the Democrat National Committee in the last campaign.

FBI agents also said, under oath, Justice Department lawyers actually impeded and delayed and obstructed any investigation.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. Whether we are a Republican or a Democrat or an Independent, this is wrong. This may in fact be criminal. And the Justice Department warrants a thorough investigation by an independent counsel, not one of their own peers.

The trouble is, Mr. Speaker, Congress turns the other cheek. Shame, Congress.

I yield back China Gate. I yield back Travel Gate. I yield back Ruby Ridge. I yield back Waco. And I yield back more to come.

DEMOCRATS WANT TO SPEND MORE—REPUBLICANS WANT TO SPEND LESS

(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, as we move to the end of the closure for our budget this year, on almost every single bill, on almost every single amendment to every bill, this dispute between the Republicans and the Democrats comes down to the same thing. The Democrats want to spend more and more around here. Republicans want to spend less and provide accountability.

In fact, any attempt by Republicans to limit spending is met by outrage, accusations by the Democrats that Republicans are mean-spirited.

Yet, for 40 years while they were in the majority there was hardly a Government program they did not support, a Government program they did not expand, or a Government program they did not dream about building. Yet, now Democrats are actually trying to portray themselves as a party of fiscal responsibility.

Please spare us, the American people, this rhetoric. Republicans were elected in 1994, and they forced the President to sign a balanced budget despite loud protests from the left that it would require savage cuts. The Republicans believe in fiscal accountability, and they are trying hard to value the taxpayers' money.

REMEMBERING FIREFIGHTER STEPHEN MASTO

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the service and pay tribute to Stephen Joseph Masto. Stephen died in late August while helping to battle a wildfire in Los Padres National Forest in my district.

At the young age of 28, Stephen had already devoted his career to public safety. He spent his career fighting fires all over Southern California and the central coast. We can never repay Stephen or his family for his dedication, hard work, and ultimate sacrifice. Rather, we must honor him by being especially mindful of the brave men and women firefighters he has left behind.

These individuals have committed themselves to protecting the lives and safety of their neighbors in times of need. Like Stephen, they are true heroes in every sense of the word.

I know that I speak for my entire community when I extend my most heartfelt condolences to Stephen's families and loved ones who will miss him so terribly. We honor him when we honor the people he has left behind.

IT IS TIME TO CLEAN HOUSE AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, it seems that rarely does a day go by when we