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No. 128

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC.
September 28, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN COOKSEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

THE BUDGET PROCESS AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, for those who are concerned about making our communities more livable, New Year's Eve is approaching; not the one that ushers in the new millennium, but one which for a number of us may be even more problematic. I am talking about the Federal fiscal new year that ends in just 2 days. As the end draws near and as we begin the final stages of this year's budget process, there are

still many decisions to be made and much work to be done.

Currently our friends on the Committee on Appropriations are trying desperately to avert the disaster of last year's omnibus spending bill. We all recall the millions upon millions of dollars given away in the dead of night to special interests and pet projects as we in Congress were given a 2,714-page bill at 4 o'clock in the afternoon to vote on at 7 that evening. This pathetic process made Congress look foolish while sadly skewing our funding priorities. It was a lose-lose proposition.

The truth is that apparently we did not learn from last year's mistakes, and as this year's budget end game approaches, we are finding that we are in a similar situation. The budget gimmicks, the phony emergency spending, the effort to redefine the Federal fiscal year, adding an extra month, delaying this funding, advanced funding, the list is long as the Committee on Appropriations struggles to keep faith with the unrealistic spending caps that we all know were broken last year and which are being broken as we speak.

It is not the fault of the Committee on Appropriations, who, if left to their own devices, could craft a much better product. But as we travel down this familiar and unfortunate route, we are finding that what is broken is also the public trust in how the Federal Government uses their money.

But it does not have to be the case. We can change by shifting our priorities from partisan jockeying to funding initiatives that will truly make a difference in the daily lives of our constituents. We need to call upon our friends in the leadership, the Committee on Appropriations, and the administration to secure funding for things that will make our communities more livable.

A good place to start is in the administration's own budget, in a list of livable communities initiatives. They are

not big ticket items, but they would offer dramatic impacts.

Some of those livability initiatives include the lands legacy package, to expand Federal efforts to save America's natural treasures, and provide significant new resources to States and communities to protect local green spaces.

The Better America Bonds is a proposed new funding tool that would generate \$9.5 billion in bond authority for investments by State, local, and tribal governments in green spaces, urban parks, water quality, and brownfield cleanup. Tax credits, totaling more than \$700 million over 5 years, are proposed to finance the bonds.

There is the Community Transportation Choices, the TCSP program, already authorized by Congress under the T-21 legislation, which earlier this year generated over 500 creative proposals to help communities deal with the transportation challenges that they face. Thirty-two grants totaling \$13 million were given, but now the entire program has been earmarked. Instead of giving communities direct aid, rewarding those that submit the most creative and effective proposals, only five of the proposed earmarks even bothered to submit a proposal altogether.

As we travel America, there are very few people who are concerned about the partisan squabbling over our budget. Most of America is concerned by the tragedy that was represented by the massive flooding and storm loss, the loss of life and property by Hurricane Floyd. They are focused on problems of everyday life: pollution, congestion, unplanned growth, and safety of their children. Congress needs to implement these livability proposals in the budget process now to address what Americans have spoken for.

The local newspapers from coast-to-coast are filled with references to people trying to make their communities

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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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more livable. Funding these initiatives is necessary to minimize problems in the future, while improving the quality of life for generations to come.

We owe it to our constituents to fund these initiatives, and I encourage the Committee on Appropriations to include them in our budget to help make our families safe, healthy, and economically secure in more livable communities.

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 7 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

We know how simple it is to talk about matters of faith, and how easy it is to speak of the relevance of religion for ourselves and for our Nation. Yet, O God, we know that there is often a chasm between what we say and what we do.

On this day we pray that our good words of faith will find meaning in the good works of justice in our daily lives and all that we profess with our mouths and all that we believe in our hearts will be translated into deeds of concern and acts of love.

Help us, gracious God, to make our lives vital and with special purpose by making faith active in love. 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 California (Mrs. CAPPS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. CAPPS 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.

WHISTLE-BLOWER PROTECTIONS FOR NURSES

(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, the House will soon act on managed-care reform. In this debate we must protect the whistle-blowing rights for nurses and health professionals.

Patients depend on nurses to ensure they receive proper care. Nurses who see the health of their patients endangered should feel 100 percent confident that they can voice their concerns without retaliation from their employers.

I have been a registered nurse for over 30 years. I understand firsthand how difficult it is to come forward and report abuses, situations which compromise the quality of care. No one should feel that their job is in jeopardy because they speak on behalf of the safety of their patients.

Let us show our support for nurses and healthcare professionals. Support the whistle-blower language in the bipartisan Norwood-Dingell managed-care bill.

PRESIDENT SHOULD VETO NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY AMENDMENTS OF 1999

(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, Senate bill 1287, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments of 1999, has been introduced in the United States Senate. Although this bill would not establish a temporary nuclear storage facility in Nevada, you should be aware of its misguided attempts to deal with the permanent disposal of nuclear waste.

The passage of this legislation would place unneeded and dangerous environmental, safety, and health risks upon millions of Americans. Therefore, I would urge the President to uphold his commitment to Nevada and the American people by reaffirming his veto promise.

Senate bill 187 would accelerate the time line for permanent disposal at Yucca Mountain, ignoring the ongoing scientific studies and our Nation's environmental laws that were designed to protect its citizens. It would also allow the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, not the EPA, to establish dangerous radiation standards. Such a change in law would facilitate contamination of groundwater supplies and endanger all Americans along the transportation routes with higher dosage of deadly radiation, ultimately destroying the lives of American families.

Mr. President, where is your promise? The American people deserve to hear your voice on this critically important issue.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HELPING CHINESE COMMUNISTS

(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, first it was Ruby Ridge and Waco, now it is Chinese money laundering. The Justice Department continues to cover up the truth.

FBI Agent Parker testified that 27 pages of her notebook detailing crimes on Charlie Trie were stolen. Agent Parker also said that the Justice Department blocked a search warrant allowing Charlie Trie to destroy bank records and money transfers from the Bank of China that ended up at the Democrat National Committee.

Think about it. The Justice Department is now covering up the truth, helping Chinese communists.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker.

It is time for a full independent investigation, not another investigation appointed by Janet Reno.

I yield back the crimes at the Justice Department.

ENDING THE 30-YEAR RAID ON THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

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

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, for over 30 years Washington big spenders have been raiding the Social Security trust funds to feed the greed for a bigger, more bloated government.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time to "Stop the Raid." This Republican Congress has committed itself to protecting every dime of Social Security.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the President wants to spend the Social Security surplus. According to his most recent budget, he wants \$1 trillion in new government spending in the next 10 years. He can only do that, Mr. Speaker, by spending from the Social Security surplus.

In fact, according to the Congressional Budget Office, his budget would spend \$57 billion of the Social Security surplus next year alone.

Mr. Speaker, we will seize this historic opportunity and we will, for the first time in over 30 years, restore the integrity of the Social Security trust fund and honor our children as they pay those taxes for grandma and grandpa's retirement and stop the raid on Social Security.

REGARDING EDUCATION AND THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, we are facing a tragedy in this country's education system. Now, I am not talking about the fact that children are being forced to learn in school buildings that are literally falling apart, in classes whose size are literally bursting