

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God Almighty, to call You Eternal is to place You in every moment yet beyond time. Be attentive to our prayer.

We bless You and praise You for the time this weekend we have gathered with Your people of faith. In those moments we listened to Your Word, we thanked You with our brothers and sisters of faith for Your presence and guidance in our daily lives. We are grateful to You, O Lord, for the moments we had this weekend to spend with family and friends. These relationships ground us in love and sustain us in all that we do. Take care of those committed to our care by life or by constitution.

Time is a most precious commodity to us and to all in the human family. To the wealthy and successful, time is a priceless gift. Never enough. To those suffering, in pain or incarcerated, time is elongated and penetrating. On them, Lord, have mercy. Help the people of this assembly and of this Nation to seize the present moment and to fill our day with works of peace and justice.

Over this weekend we have taken time in our hands and through agreement we have changed time. Lord, let this be a sign of hope to all of us and to peoples of the world. If we can change this measure of motion which governs so much of our lives; if we can agree to meet one another on a new common perception of Your unfolding mystery, such as time change, how close we are to realizing the true power You give us to negotiate change and how myriad are the possibilities for other common endeavors in the future.

Give us time to work through our problems. Help us to seek out the time to be truly present to one another. Help us, enable us to so enter this week, this day with open minds and hearts that we find You, Lord of life and light, here in the present moment. For You live and reign now and forever. 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 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.

NCAA AND ILLEGAL GAMBLING

(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, last week before a hearing at the Senate Commerce Committee, I voiced my strong opposition to legislation currently pending before both houses of Congress which would ban college sports betting in just Nevada. While I oppose this legislation, I support the goal of maintaining the integrity of college athletics. But there is simply no evidence, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that the highly regulated and legal sports betting industry in Nevada is responsible in any way for the illegal sports wagering and the point shaving scams that are taking place on our college campuses.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge the NCAA, the leading supporter of this legislation, to look in the mirror. Certainly the numerous Final Four sweepstakes promoted by the NCAA and its corporate sponsors encourages illegal wagering on college sports more than the existence of Nevada's strictly regulated sports books. Let us not punish a respected industry for a societal problem. Active and effective enforcement of current laws is the only way to stop point shaving scams and illegal gambling on our college campuses.

TIME TO SECURE OUR BORDERS

(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, the Mexican drug cartel crossed our border and opened fire on our security forces. Reports say the Mexican drug barons have placed a \$200,000 bounty on any American border guard. Think about it. If these assassins kill five American guards, they make \$1 million. If that is not enough to bust your buns, Mexico apologized by saying it was very, quote-unquote, regrettable.

Beam me up. It is time to secure our borders. If our military can vaccinate dogs in Haiti, they can secure our borders.

I yield back the fact that Congress keeps turning the other cheek, and Mexican drug barons are now servicing all four cheeks. Think about it.

U.N. PEACEKEEPING COSTS ON THE RISE

(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, I do not think my colleagues would be surprised to hear that the U.N. peacekeeping costs are on the rise. A recent Washington Post article reported that peacekeeping costs are expected to double this year to nearly \$2 billion.

This means that the United States will again be strapped with a financial and a personal burden, especially since the administration has stretched our military so much.

Under the current formula, the U.S. pays about 30 percent, almost one-third of all the peacekeeping costs. Contrast that with China who is a member of the United Nations and they contribute a little less than 1 percent. The same China that the administration wants Congress to recognize for permanent normal trade relations. This antiquated formula has not changed for 26 years.

A Republican led Congress has finally addressed this problem by requiring that United States arrears be tied to a more equitable formula. But this change is likely to meet with conflict. So who is shocked that many countries that have a free ride are balking at financial responsibility? Congress must maintain fiscal responsibility by requiring all members of the U.N. to do their share, including China.

IT IS TIME AMERICAN PEOPLE LEARNED THE TRUTH

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

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, last month the Democrats criticized our budget resolution with their standard risky rhetoric, claiming our budget would cause children to starve and deny health care for the elderly. Ironically, it is the irresponsible accounting of the Clinton-Gore administration that really puts our children and seniors at risk. In fiscal year 1997, the Clinton-Gore Agriculture Department wasted \$1 billion in erroneous food stamp payments, money that could have fed 5 percent more of our Nation's impoverished children. In fiscal year 1998, Medicare wasted \$12.6 billion in overpayments to health care providers, money that could have helped thousands of American seniors. And in 1995, the Veterans' Administration nonchalantly ignored nearly \$12 million in benefits owed to the Veterans' Administration, even though many elderly American veterans are struggling to get by.

It is time the American people learned the truth. The risky wasteful policies belong to the Clinton-Gore Democrats, not the Republicans.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules but not before 6 p.m. today.