

George Mahon, the Chairman; John Rhodes, the Republican Leader, and Jim Wright, who is with us today on the Democratic side. The committee, we met in that office right over there. Now I know how important it is to have an office right off the floor.

They asked me this question: What do you think about religion and politics? And leaping into my mind was a quote that the Governor of Minnesota had used in a chapel talk many years before, quoting Martin Luther, and I gave in answer to them, I said, "As Martin Luther said in 1530, quote: Send your good men into the ministry, but send your best into politics. Because in the ministry it all depends on the spirit, but in politics you have shades of gray, ambiguities, and you need the finest people." Of course, after that self-serving comment, they hired me on the spot. But I also believe it. I grew up that way, and I believe it.

When I left this place, I wrote a letter to the Members and I said that my feelings about Congress were strong when I came, and they are strengthened now that I leave. Religion points to the goals of life, politics tells us how to get there. We can agree on justice and peace, or faith, hope, and love. Call it what you will. But in politics, we have the give and take of argument and debate as to the how of achieving our goals.

I remember as a young man in the 1950s, I went to the Soviet Union and I visited the legislature and it was quiet. And in the 1960s, I went to the East German legislature and it was quiet. Democracy is noisy. I like the noise. I have been with the noise here for 21 years. It is a part of the gift of democracy.

Concluding, in my 21 years here, I counted up I have been here for about 35 joint meetings. And as you know, it is a joint session when the President comes; it is a joint meeting when the Heads of State come. And during this time, in these 35 speeches that I heard, I do not think one of them has lived under one constitution for 200 years. We are a young Nation with a very old and mature Constitution.

I heard Vaclav Havel speak here from Czechoslovakia. Remember, he got up and said "I am just a playwright. What do I know? There is no school to be President." And we celebrated democracy with him.

Lech Walesa of Poland got up, and he said, "I am an electrician. If the lights go out tonight, I can fix them. But now I am leading a country." Or Nelson Mandela, 27 years in prison who stood up here and spoke about reconciliation.

It has been a pride to serve as your chaplain for these many years, for politics is a noble vocation, a noble opportunity and calling. I have observed your debates. I have listened to your private concerns. I have encouraged you in your service. I have celebrated with you the joys of democracy.

When you think of your service as former Members in this Congress, I say

to you stand tall and be proud, because your politics has been a noble vocation. Thank you.

Mr. MCHUGH. On behalf of all of us, Jim, we thank you again for your friendship and your warmth and your great service to this institution and to us.

We also welcome and wish our best to the new chaplain, who I am sure will serve with equal distinction.

Mr. Speaker, the Members of the association were honored and proud to serve in the U.S. Congress and in a way we are continuing our service to the Nation in other ways now, but hopefully ones that are equally as effective. Again, we thank you for letting us make this annual report, and this concludes our session for today, and we again invite all of the Members to the next panel at 10:30 on the China-U.S. relations. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair again wishes to thank the former Members of the House for their presence here today. Before terminating these proceedings, the Chair would like to invite those former Members who did not respond when the roll was called to give their names to the reading clerks for inclusion in the roll.

The Chair wishes to thank the former Members of Congress for their response here today. Good luck to all of you.

The Chair announces that the House will reconvene at 10:45 a.m.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 26 minutes a.m.) the House continued in recess.

□ 1045

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOEHNER) at 10 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

Mr. BOEHNER. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minute requests on each side this morning.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the recess have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

GOP WORKING TO MAKE NEEDED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AVAILABLE AND AFFORDABLE TO ALL

(Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma asked and was given permission to address the

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

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, America is the most prosperous nation on earth, yet some seniors here are forced to choose between putting food on their table and the prescription drugs they need to lead healthy and productive lives. That is just not right.

Republicans are working to make sure that is a choice seniors no longer have to make. While I share the goal of President Clinton and Democrats in Congress, their proposal may endanger existing drug coverage that some seniors already have. It could give the Federal Government too heavy a hand in controlling drug benefits and deny seniors the right to select the coverage that best fits their respective needs.

Republicans have a voluntary plan to make prescription drug coverage affordable and available to America's seniors. Republicans are working to protect seniors from runaway drug costs so that their retirement remains secure and they have greater peace of mind. That is a brighter future for every single American.

VOTE AGAINST PNTR FOR CHINA

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, if you were told that the Yankees scored six runs in a ball game, would you conclude the Yankees won? Of course not. You need to know how many runs the Yankees' opponent scored in the game to know if they won, especially if they played against our Cleveland team.

Whether it is baseball or trade, people need to know the score. In this case, between the U.S. and China, the U.S. has a trade deficit with China of about \$70 billion. So we are losing the game with China. The rising trade deficit is unlucky for the United States and our workers. But the bill number for PNTR for China is H.R. 4444, and four is a very unlucky number. Ask the Chinese. And the Chinese workers are unlucky already because some get only three cents an hour pay for their work.

This bill is bad luck for the United States, and it is bad luck for China. Vote against PNTR.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR SENIORS

(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, not long ago, news anchor Tom Brokaw wrote a book in which he called today's seniors the greatest generation. After all, it was today's seniors who saw this country through the Depression and fought to save the world from Nazi aggression.

Mr. Speaker, no American and no senior, those who have served this country so well for so many years,

should ever have to choose between putting food on the table and taking the medicine their doctor has prescribed. But today's advanced medications are expensive.

The Republicans in the House have a plan to modernize Medicare by adding a prescription drug plan. This plan is fair, sensible and necessary. Under this plan, seniors will be able to choose the coverage that best suits their needs. It will protect seniors from high out-of-pocket costs and be completely voluntary. The President and the minority party in Congress owe it to our seniors to stop the politics of fear and to support this bill.

FOOD OR MEDICINE?

(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, after a lifetime of hard work, our senior citizens should be able to enjoy their golden years. But unfortunately, instead of enjoying their retirement, the rising cost of prescription drugs forces many seniors to choose between putting food on the table or buying lifesaving medications. Forcing seniors into this type of decision is wrong and it must stop.

The Republicans have brought forward a responsible, common sense prescription drug plan that provides our seniors access to affordable prescription drugs. Under the Republican proposal, seniors will have the power to choose prescription drug plans that best fit their needs instead of being forced into the Democrats' inefficient, dangerous, big-government, price control scheme. The Republican plan assures that no senior citizen or disabled American will have to choose between food and medicine again.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the administration's dangerous one-size-fits-all, government-dictated drug scheme which fails to meet the needs of our seniors.

WHO IS LYING ABOUT WACO?

(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, who is lying about Waco? Scientist Carl Ghigliotti said the FBI lied, that they did fire automatic weapons into the burning building. But Vector Data Systems of England said the FBI did not lie. Two scientific groups totally disagree.

But something stinks. Vector gets hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts from the FBI. Carl Ghigliotti was just found dead. To boot, FBI audio tapes of the burning building are now lost. To boot, FBI autopsy reports confiscated of victims are now missing.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. This is not a Justice Department. This is a cover-up. We need an investigation. Congress

should pass H.R. 4105 and put some oversight on what is developing into a police state in America.

VOTE NO ON PNTR

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, every year for the last 30 years we have granted China most-favored-nation status. The presidencies of Reagan, Bush and Clinton have all stated that most-favored-nation status will open China to freedom and democracy. Let us look at the scorecard a little bit regarding this strategy.

We gave most-favored-nation status and they continue their policy of population planning with forced abortion. We gave most-favored-nation status and they continue not to tolerate any dissent of any kind. The imprisonments, the torture and the killings go on. We gave most-favored-nation status and they continue to try to stamp out religion that is not state-supported religion. We gave most-favored-nation status and they made plans to invade Taiwan. We gave most-favored-nation status to them and they have the biggest buildup of nuclear missile development of any country on the face of the earth. We gave most-favored-nation status and they continue to occupy Tibet. We gave most-favored-nation status and they pour money into American elections.

Are we nuts? Can we not learn? America sometimes has the reputation of being willing to do anything for a buck. On this vote, we are set to prove that that is true.

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR AMENDMENT

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I am offering an amendment to the defense authorization bill that will bring honor and distinction to America's most highly decorated veterans. As a veteran myself who served in the 101st Airborne Division and 82nd Airborne Division, I was surprised to learn that the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to our veterans as this Nation's highest honor for their heroic efforts is made primarily of brass.

Congress awards its own gold medal to distinguished Americans, and this medal costs as much as \$30,000 and is made of solid gold. My amendment would replace the brass in the Congressional Medal of Honor we award to America's brave Americans with gold.

I do not think it is too much of a price to pay for our most heroic Americans. It would only cost about \$2,000 per medal. Many of the recipients of the Medal of Honor already paid the ultimate price for our Nation and for our freedoms and liberty. We need to remember our veterans and think about them every day.

There are more than 25 million veterans in the United States. There are more than 3 million veterans in California. That is why I am holding a veterans' fair on Saturday recognizing veterans.

Today, I invite my colleagues who honor and respect America's veterans to join me in supporting my amendment for a more fitting Medal of Honor to individuals.

VETERANS GROUPS OPPOSE PNTR

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, almost every day a new veterans group comes out against PNTR. The Military Order of the Purple Heart, chartered by Congress, said yesterday:

"Speaking as patriots and combat wounded veterans, we believe that granting PNTR status to China would relieve them from the current pressure caused by annual congressional review of their trade status.

"Today China represents the most dangerous of the emerging threats to U.S. national security."

It goes on to say, "Many of America's combat wounded veterans sacrificed life and blood to repel Chinese aggression during the Korean conflict. Fifty years after that war, China remains an unabashedly communistic regime. It is time for China to change if she wishes to be a truly welcomed participant on the world's stage. It is also time for Congress and the administration to reflect upon the sacrifices of its combat wounded veterans and ensure that China will not once again become our enemy. In the view of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, this objective must be reached before PNTR status should be granted to China."

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR SENIORS

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, seniors deserve prescription drug coverage and Republicans have a plan to provide it for them. Last week, the Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health had a hearing on the President's prescription drug plan.

As a member of the committee, I was pleased to learn there are several ways where we can agree. But history must not repeat itself. This issue must not be used in this election to scare our seniors. Scare tactics serve no purpose and do not help one senior get the drugs they need.

Republicans are ready to roll up our sleeves and give seniors a choice in their Medicare prescription drug coverage. I welcome my Democrat colleagues and the President to join us in this important effort.