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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KUYKENDALL).

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DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 22, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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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 not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for 5 minutes.

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NEW ECONOMY IS IMPORTANT FOR EVERY AMERICAN

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much this opportunity to take a few minutes today to talk about something many of us call the new economy, some call the digital economy, the high-tech economy. But let me begin by just sharing some statistics, statistics that really illustrate how important the new economy is for every American.

Today over 100 million United States adults are using the Internet. In fact,

seven new people are on the Internet every second. As elected officials, we should note that 78 percent of Internet users almost always vote in national, State, and local elections, compared with only 64 percent of non-Internet users.

It took just 5 years for the Internet to reach 50 million users. It took 38 years for the radio to reach that same audience, 13 years for television. In 1998, the Internet economy employed 4.8 million workers, more workers than steel and auto and petrochemical industries combined.

I would note that, with the economic growth we are enjoying today, the average high-tech wage is 77 percent higher than the average U.S. private sector wage and that Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, indicates that one-third of the economic growth that we have enjoyed today is resulting from the high-tech, new economy.

I am proud to be from a State that is a high-tech State. Illinois is a State which ranks fourth today in high-technology employment. We also rank third in high-technology exports. So clearly, this new economy, this technology economy that we are enjoying today is providing tremendous opportunity for every American family.

We often wonder who is really taking advantage of the opportunities that are there, how is the Internet and digital or new economy available to the average American. Statistics also show that if a family makes \$75,000 or more, they are 20 times more likely than families with less income to have Internet access at home.

And when you think about it, our educators, our school teachers, the school board members, and school administrators back home in Illinois and Chicago and the south suburbs that I represent have told me they notice a difference in the classroom between those students who have a computer

and Internet access at home and students who do not.

Children with computers and Internet access at home have an advantage when it comes to doing their homework as well as using the Internet to contact the Library of Congress to do research on school papers.

If my colleagues talk with lower-income families who do not have computer and Internet access, they tell us that the main reason is the cost; the cost of Internet access is really the barrier to digital opportunities for that family.

As Republicans, of course, our goal is to reduce that cost. We believe in a tax-free, regulation-free trade barrier, free new economy; and we want to ensure that the information superhighway is a freeway and not a tollway. We are looking for ways to remove those toll booths and make sure the Internet is free or at minimal cost to families.

I am proud of what we have been accomplishing. Just over the last few weeks, we passed legislation which says no new taxes on e-commerce, extending for 5 years the current Internet tax moratorium on e-commerce. I am proud to say that we passed legislation just 2 weeks ago which prohibits the Federal Communications Commission from using the authority they have had for a long time to impose new fees and taxes on Internet access.

This week the House is going to vote on legislation to eliminate the 3 percent excise tax on telephone calls, which really is a 3 percent excise tax on Internet access, because 96 percent of Americans who use the Internet and go on-line use their telephone service. So clearly, when this House votes this week to eliminate that 3 percent tax on telephone calls, we will be removing one more toll on the information superhighway.

□ 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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Clearly, as Republicans, our goal is simple. We want the information super-highway to be a freeway and not a toll-way.

I also want to mention two other proposals I am proud to sponsor, legislation which is designed to ensure the information highway is a freeway not a toll-way. I talked earlier about lower-income families not having computer and Internet access at home. I am proud to say that major employers in the State that I represent in Illinois have stepped forward, the private sector stepping forward to provide Internet and computer access as an employee benefit so the children of their janitors and laborers and assembly line workers of companies like Ford, Intel, American Airlines, and Delta Airlines have those computers.

Well, those computers should be tax free. Right now the IRS would like to tax them. That act would ensure they are treated the same as an employee benefit, such as pensions and retirement, as well as health care. I ask bipartisan support, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on these proposals.

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RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

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□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida) at 2 p.m.

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PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the field; the grass withers and the flower wilts; but the Word of the Lord remains forever."

Creator of nature's beauty and Redeemer of all humanity, we have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed.

Your Word, O Lord, has created grateful hearts amid the wonders of this land and the rich progress of this Nation. May we never be weeded into discontent.

In all peoples You plant the seed of justice. Bring forth a springtime of peace among nations.

May the actions of this assembly nurture obedience to truth which produces sincerity of heart and mutual trust.

This is the Word we have accepted and now proclaim to the world: "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the field; the grass withers and the flower wilts; but the Word of the Lord remains 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.

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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.

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SCANDALS OF THE ADMINISTRATION

(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, well, it took almost 2 years, but memos from FBI Director Louis Freeh regarding the Democratic fund-raising scandal have finally been turned over to Congress.

Perhaps the Clinton administration was hoping that the memos would never turn up, especially since they state that key administration officials were under a lot of pressure not to go forward with the investigation because the Attorney General's job might hang in the balance.

The American people have a right to expect the Department of Justice to investigate wrongdoing, no matter where it may occur.

Mr. Speaker, the Clinton administration is not exempt from the laws of our Nation. It is my hope that the ongoing congressional hearings and investigations into these scandals will reveal the truth once and for all.

I yield back the continuing scandals and illegal cover-ups that have become an unfortunate characteristic of this administration.

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CHINA SAYS AMERICAN SHIPS ARE DEAD MEAT

(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, military experts say that China just bought 24 cruise missiles from Russia. They now say American ships are now, quote/unquote, dead meat, dead meat. Think about it. We give Russia foreign aid. Russia builds missiles. Russia sells the missiles to China, built with American cash. China threatens Taiwan and Uncle Sam. Unbelievable.

I think it is time for Congress to tell China to keep their Communist hands off of Taiwan.

In addition, this sweetheart trade deal bothers me. It is very dangerous.

If Uncle Sam will turn the other cheek on Taiwan, China will laugh all the way to the bank on this trade deal. Beam me up. We have gone from better dead than red to dead meat.

I yield back America's Naval fleet being called dead meat by Naval experts.

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IT IS TIME TO ABOLISH THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR TAX

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

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, one of the top movies in America today is "Gladiator," a story of a young upstart struggling against an outdated and cruel dictatorship.

This week, the House will witness a similar struggle, Americans with phone lines versus the Internal Revenue Service.

More than 252 million businesses and families use phone lines, allowing them access to telephones, faxes, computers, and cellular phones. They are beneficiaries of modern technological advances that have changed our society, and yet every time Americans use this technology, the IRS financially penalizes them with the outdated Spanish-American War phone tax.

This tax was used to fund the Spanish-American War, a conflict which began and ended in 1898, 102 years ago. It is yet another case of a greedy and overbearing government using any means to tax hard-working Americans and this must end.

This week, let us disconnect Americans from the Spanish-American War phone tax.

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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of 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.

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NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2000

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 834) to extend the authorization for the National Historic Preservation Fund, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate Amendments:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 2000".