



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 146

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2000

No. 27

Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 20, 2000, at 12 noon.

House of Representatives

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2000

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida).

□

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 13, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAN MILLER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

□

PRAYER

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

We are appreciative, O God, of our own heritage of faith for we know that we have gained strength and confidence by knowing our traditions and the values that make our traditions come alive. Yet we celebrate this day, gracious God, the opportunities that we have to hear other voices of faith and to learn about differing traditions. Grant every person, whatever their background or responsibility, not only to experience the fullness of their own faith, but to understand more fully the practice and traditions of others. Help us to lift our eyes and open our ears so we realize more fully that every person has been created in Your image and we share together in Your abiding spirit and love. This is our earnest prayer. 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DEFAZIO 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 desires to announce that pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the Speaker signed the following enrolled bill on Friday, March 10, 2000:

S. 376, to amend the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 to promote competition and privatization in satellite communications, and for other purposes.

□

APPOINTMENT AS INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to clause 6 of

rule II, the Chair announces the joint appointment by the Speaker, majority leader, and minority leader of Mr. Steven A. McNamara of Sterling, Virginia, to the position of Inspector General for the United States House of Representatives for the 106th Congress.

There was no objection.

□

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill, a joint resolution, and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1653. An act to reauthorize and amend the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act.

S.J. Res. 39. Joint resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Korean War and the service by members of the Armed Forces during such war, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 95. Concurrent resolution commemorating the twelfth anniversary of the Halabja massacre.

□

FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY IS PREVENTING AMERICA'S CHILDREN FROM LEARNING

(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, there is some troubling news about our educational system which seems to be heading in the wrong direction.

A recent survey of college students showed that 45 percent of those college

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H923

students would be denied U.S. citizenship because they could not correctly answer at least seven out of ten basic American history questions.

Mr. Speaker, foreigners know more about U.S. history and they know that history better than our own children. The poll showed that 56 percent of students could not place in order of occurrence the U.S. invasion of Normandy, the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the fall of the Berlin Wall. But 94 percent knew that Leonardo DiCaprio was the lead actor in "Titanic."

Mr. Speaker, Federal spending on education is at an all-time high; and yet, 40 percent of our Nation's fourth graders fall below the basic level of reading achievement. It is obvious that more money on failing programs is not the answer.

We need to enact real educational reform that give parents and teachers the resources they need to educate our children.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back all the Federal bureaucracy that is preventing our children from learning U.S. history.

□

AMERICA IS SUBSERVIENT TO OPEC COUNTRIES

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

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, how long can we Americans tolerate the spectacle of our country groveling at the feet of OPEC countries and begging them to produce more oil, pleading with them to send us more oil, pleading with them to reduce the cost of gasoline at the pump, of our energy costs?

We are subservient to the OPEC countries. The greatest country in the world is being dictated to in its practices by OPEC. We cannot tolerate that. We shall not sustain that.

For those purposes, we are going to begin to circulate very soon a bill which will create a blue ribbon commission to determine how within 10 years we can become self-sufficient in energy. No more of this dependence on foreign oil. We can do it ourselves and we must.

We must explore to the fullest extent the oil possibilities in our own land, in Alaska, and wherever energy can be produced and conserved. We must give offshore drilling a fair chance with due diligence and due respect to the environment. But we must do everything possible so that we do not have to be enslaved by OPEC.

□

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT MUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE HIGH COST OF OIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, gasoline is nearing \$2 a gallon across the United States. Diesel is up 50 percent. Home heating oil at one point spiked over 100 percent increase from last year. Aviation fuel is on the rise.

Now we have got the Federal Reserve saying they are worried about inflation so they are going to jack up interest rates. Of course, we have got the oil companies at OPEC fixing prices and curtailing production, causing inflation. I say the likelihood of an economic disaster or recession or a dramatic slowdown is pretty great.

Now, what is the response? Well, the response of the Clinton administration and the Republican leadership in Congress to the artificial shortages and the run up in prices is pathetic.

The administration sounds like a bunch of corporate Republicans, let the free market work. Well, guess what? There is no free market in the production and distribution of oil.

The OPEC cartels have met and decided to hold down production and drive up prices to profit themselves and the multi-national oil companies with whom they work hand in glove. Free market? Sure.

Now, the Republican response is equally pathetic, cut taxes, cut taxes. That seems to be the only solution to anything around here. How much? 4.3 cents. They are going to cut gasoline taxes by 4.3 cents. That will solve the problem.

Well, guess what? The taxes were the same level last year when gas was a dollar a gallon. Now it is going to be \$2 a gallon. And that 4.3 cents, the oil companies will suck that up in less than an hour. That is a pathetic response.

They do have another response. Drill the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge. Ninety-five percent of the north slope is available for oil exploitation.

There is one little tiny bit left. Let us go and punch holes in there. For what? To destroy that pristine area, for what? For 6 months' supply if the optimists are right. More likely, for a few pathetic months' supply. Ruin that area for all time.

And ironically, the same party, the Republicans, jammed legislation through this House 5 years ago demanding that the United States export the oil currently being produced in Alaska.

Now, that is kind of strange. They want to go up and destroy the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge to produce more oil that they will then export. Why are they doing that? Well, because the big oil companies wanted that, and they are beholden to the big oil companies. This is a predictable and pathetic response to a national crisis.

There is an alternative. Take on the big oil companies. Well, there are not too many around here that want to do that. But, guess what? There is a way we can do it. The President is all for rules-based trade. The Republican majority says they are the greatest defenders of the World Trade Organization. They provided the majority of votes to create it, and they defend it day in and day out in this body.

Article 11 of the Charter of the World Trade Organization, of which six OPEC countries are full members, prohibits, prohibits restrictions on the productions of materials for export.

It is pretty simple. Here we have an organization the U.S. has created, the Clinton administration and the Republican majority backs a hundred percent, they say they want rules-based trade. Well, let us use those rules.

Now, they filed a complaint for a guy who grows bananas. Now, we do not grow bananas in the United States. But he is a big campaign contributor, so the U.S. used its clout in that organization for bananas, used it for hormone-laced beef. But somehow it seems that we cannot use our clout in that organization to file a complaint against OPEC and the largest multi-national oil companies in the world.

It is time to stand tall as a Nation to those oil companies and their partners, the OPEC nations. Use the rules we have. That is a good beginning. There is more that needs to be done.

I am introducing legislation today to ask the President, to strongly urge the President to file that complaint. I hope he does not need that legislation to move forward.

We also need to begin dealing with all the subsidies we provide to those countries, the foreign aid, the military subsidies and the others.

Burden sharing. Kuwait is one of the countries dragging its feet for additional oil production. Did we not save Kuwait?

Now, Kuwait says they are not going to lift a finger. In fact, they want to keep prices down because nobody in Kuwait has to work because the prices are so high. They import workers in Kuwait. Maybe a little burden sharing is in order for some of these countries that we are protecting and extending billions of dollars or our defense umbrella to every year.

And then finally, let us get serious about conservation and renewables and energy independence in this country. If anything poses a threat to this Nation in the next century, it is the fact that we have not gotten serious about concentration and renewables and now we are importing 60 percent of our oil.

This is a threat to the future security of this country. This Congress should not sit on its hands, nor should the President downtown just because some of the largest campaign contributors in the world do not want to do anything about the higher prices for oil. We can do something. It is in our power. Let us act.