



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 147

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2001

No. 13

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Chaplain Steven Colwell, Army Reserve Readiness Training Center, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, offered the following prayer:

Our most gracious Heavenly Father, we thank You for giving us this day, another day of life for us to cherish Your goodness and Your majesty. May we use this day seeking Truth and in so doing return it as our gift to You.

O Lord, bless these gathered here with Your wisdom. Guard them and guide them, O Father, and fill them with Your Presence. Bless their families and the staffs that labor by their side in government. May the laws enacted here conform to the Great Law that emanates from Your righteousness. I beseech You, Lord, to hear this prayer, prayed by a simple soldier, offered to You in the Name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LAMPSON 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.

CHAPLAIN STEVEN COLWELL

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker for the opportunity to say a few words about our guest chaplain today. I am proud that the inspiring words heard this morning came from one of my constituents, Chaplain Steven Colwell. He serves as staff minister at the Army Reserve Readiness Training Center at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

At Fort McCoy, Chaplain Colwell is the primary instructor on ethics and Army values training. In addition, he provides spiritual guidance and counseling to the more than 100,000 soldiers who come to Fort McCoy to train every year. The support that Chaplain Colwell provides to the military personnel and their families is invaluable. Chaplain Colwell has received numerous military honors, including the Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, and the South West Asia Service Medal with three Bronze Stars.

Chaplain Colwell has provided tremendous service to his community as well as our country. I am fortunate to have him as a constituent and pleased that he could share his inspiring words with us today. I thank Chaplain Colwell for being here today and for his service and dedication to our country.

APPOINTMENT AS INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule II, the Speaker, majority leader, and minority leader jointly appoint Mr. Steven A. McNamara of Sterling, Virginia, to the position of Inspector General for the United States House of Representatives for the 107th Congress, effective January 3, 2001.

MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, let me ask a question of fairness and that is a pretty fundamental issue of fairness and that is, is it right, is it fair, that under our Tax Code that married working couples pay higher taxes just because they are married? Is it right, is it fair, that two working people, a husband and wife, both in the workforce, pay on average \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married, \$1,400 more than an identical couple that lives together outside of marriage?

I think we all agree that it is wrong that 26 million married working couples on average pay \$1,400 more just because they are married. It is called the marriage tax penalty.

I was proud that this House and the Senate last year sent to the President legislation with bipartisan support wiping out the marriage tax penalty for almost everyone who suffers it. Unfortunately, it fell victim to the President's veto. Well, we have an opportunity this year to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, an opportunity to work together in a bipartisan way and send to our new President, President Bush, who indicates he will sign into

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law our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, to get the job done this year.

I want to extend the invitation to my colleagues to join with us to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTIONS

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the first time to address the 107th Congress. Representing southeast Texas has been an honor and a privilege, and I look forward to two more years of service.

My grandson Nicholas joined me at the swearing-in ceremony this year and that was great; but unfortunately, there are many grandparents and parents who have not been so lucky and do not have the opportunity to share their lives with their children and grandchildren.

During my first year in office, I founded the Congressional Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus in response to the abduction and murder of a 12-year-old girl in Friendswood, Texas. The devastation felt by her family and the determination of the volunteers who searched for her inspired me to found this caucus, which includes 138 members and provides a loud and unified voice for missing children within Congress.

Mr. Speaker, as we begin the first session of the 107th Congress, I ask my colleagues who are not already members of the caucus to join me and to encourage those who are already members to continue fighting with me for our children and for our families. Let us work together as parents, grandparents, and Members of Congress to keep our children safe.

BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER TREATMENT ACT

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last Congress the passage of the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act was a huge victory for women across our Nation. This legislation gives every State the option of providing lifesaving treatment to low-income women who have been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer through the early detection screening program.

I congratulate the governor of my home State, Florida, Jeb Bush, who recognized the great benefits of this program early on. Governor Bush included almost \$13 million in his budget to provide cancer treatment to low- and moderate-income women. I hope that the governors and legislators in every State follow the example of our governor, Jeb Bush, and help give women a fighting chance at beating this treacherous disease.

I especially congratulate Jane Torres, Teresa Moran-Menendez, and all of the members of the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition who lobbied and worked tirelessly to make this happen. On behalf of Florida's women, I thank Governor Jeb Bush.

WHITE HOUSE WAS NOT THE ONLY AMERICAN INSTITUTION THAT WAS TRASHED

(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, graffiti on the walls, furniture destroyed, doors glued shut, garbage in refrigerators. Sounds like Animal House, but I am talking about the Clinton White House. Now if that is not enough to wax your windows, former President Clinton has said, and I quote, he wants "a complete and thorough investigation into this crime at the White House." Beam me up. This is the same President that wanted no investigation into Chinese Communist cash being funneled to the Democrat National Committee, and we let him get away with it. Unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, the White House was not the only American institution that was trashed. The Clinton administration not only trashed, they shredded our Constitution.

I yield back the garbage at the former Clinton White House.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXTREMISTS DRIVE UP COST OF UTILITIES

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, if people wonder why their utility bills have gone up so much lately, they need look no further than the environmental groups. Environmentalists protest and stop or delay and thus drive up the costs every time a company tries to produce more natural gas, coal, oil or lumber. As a recent column by Thomas Sowell pointed out, these groups have stopped California from building any new power plants for over a decade. Many lower-income and senior citizens are now having to choose between eating or paying their utility bills. Most of the, quote, credit for this belongs to environmental extremists. If our leaders do not soon realize how left-wing most environmentalists have become, it will soon wreck our economy.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, because I represent the home jurisdiction of the

United States Congress, I want to personally welcome new Members of the House and my friends and colleagues from past years. Many of them will spend more of their time here than they will in their own home district. They should know something about the city, and there is a Dear Colleague coming to them which they may find useful.

The city has rapidly revitalized. After a period of financial crisis, it was the only city that had to carry State, county, and municipal functions. Ultimately, it had to have a control board like the boards they had in New York and Philadelphia and Cleveland and other cities, but on Monday after 4 years of balanced budgets and surpluses, indeed the end of the control period was announced 2 years ahead of time. We have been witnessing not only financial revival but the complete overhaul of services, enormous progress. The front page of the Washington Post talks about some of that progress today. If Members have service problems in their own home or in their own neighborhood, I hope they will be in touch with my office.

EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE A FIRST-CLASS EDUCATION

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

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, as a former teacher, I believe that our most profound responsibility is to ensure that every child has a first-class education, that no child is left behind, and that all students can share in the pride and promise of educational opportunity. That is why I am so pleased with the bipartisan support education reform is receiving from my colleagues in the House and in the Senate.

It is important that we continue to put our children above politics. I believe that while we call for higher standards, we must also provide schools with both the funding and the flexibility that they need to succeed. Flexibility is a key to success. After all, the needs of schools in Green Brook and Warren, towns in my district in New Jersey, are different from the needs of schools in Green Bay and in Wichita.

Targeting resources to local priorities will ensure that dollars reach the programs that need them the most, such as hiring new teachers to reduce class size, expanding charter schools and funding for new school construction.

I commend our President and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for advocating common sense education reforms that, if enacted, will strengthen our public schools and make sure that no child is left behind. After all, our children are our country's most precious resource.