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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.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,
February 7, 2001.

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

Imam Bassam A. Estwani, Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center, Herndon, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

All praise is for God, the Lord of the worlds.

The compassionate, the merciful.

Master of the day of judgment.

O God, You alone we worship and You alone we call on for help.

O God, guide us to the straight way.

The way of those whom You have blessed; not of those who have earned Your anger, or of those who have lost the way.

We pray that You guide this noble body of men and women to seek justice and equality for all. For as You said:

O mankind. We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know and honor each other. Indeed the most honorable of you in the sight of God is the most righteous. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MURTHA 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.

WELCOME TO IMAM BASSAM A. ESTWANI, DAR AL-HIJRAH ISLAMIC CENTER, HERNDON, VIRGINIA

(Mr. THOMAS M. DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMAS M. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. Imam Bassam A. Estwani for joining us today as the guest chaplain and offering this morning's prayer. He is the chairman of the board of the Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center, which is one of the Nation's most active and influential mosques, located in the 11th Congressional District, which I represent. He has participated in many international conferences that focus on Islam and religious values in America. He has been instrumental in bringing members of different faith communities together to promote social justice.

Mr. Estwani is a native of Syria. He has a law degree from the University of Damascus. He studied Islamic law in Damascus and at the University of Cairo. In Kuwait, Mr. Estwani participated in the publication of the Encyclopedia of Islamic Jurisprudence. In Lebanon, he established an Islamic publishing house that produced more than 200 titles in a number of different languages. He also participated in and sponsored relief and literacy programs for orphans and the homeless in this country and overseas.

The American Muslim community is growing, both in Northern Virginia and around this country, numbering over 6 million Americans today. I am very proud to represent one of the largest concentrations of American Muslims, who have chosen Northern Virginia as their home; and we are just very, very proud to have you offer the prayer today.

BETTERING RURAL HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

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

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, as co-chairman of the Rural Health Care Coalition, I want to thank my good friend and the former cochairman, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE), for all of his hard work on behalf of rural health care. His leadership will be missed, but I am sure my colleagues will join me in representing the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) as co-chairman of our Rural Health Care Coalition.

Just 2 days ago, I had the opportunity to visit Cape Fear Valley Medical Center in Fayetteville, North Carolina, along with Senator JOHN EDWARDS from North Carolina, to talk about the impact that the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 has had on the quality of care. While I am pleased that those of us in Congress have taken significant steps over the last 2 years to stop cuts in Medicare, we have much more to do to ensure that all citizens, no matter where they live in America, have access to quality health care.

The voice of rural America needs to be heard and to be heard loudly in these halls of Congress. I encourage all of my colleagues here in the Congress to join our efforts to make sure that, as we talk about and work to improve health care, that we are improving it

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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for all Americans everywhere, so that no one is left behind.

TIME TO GIVE BACK THE BUDGET SURPLUS TO AMERICA'S FAMILIES

(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, many Nevadans have come to me and said, Jim, I just can't make ends meet. We are paying more and more in taxes. How are we supposed to save for our retirement, pay off our mortgage, or even send our kids to college?

Well, Mr. Speaker, these concerns are real. According to the Census Bureau, the average household today pays almost \$9,500 in Federal income taxes every year, and that is twice what it paid in 1985. By conservative estimates, the Federal Government will have a record-breaking surplus this year of \$5.6 trillion.

Now it is time to grant the hard-working Americans the tax relief they so deserve and need. The tax relief package that President Bush has outlined will give \$1,600 back to the average working American family of four. This \$1,600 could pay their mortgage for a month, help pay off a credit card debt, or the tuition at a community college for one year.

The surplus was created by the tax dollars of the American people. It belongs to them. There is no excuse for Congress not to give the hard-working Americans what they want, what they need and what they deserve, a tax break. It is time to give the extra money back.

WASHINGTON-LINCOLN RECOGNITION ACT OF 2001

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that yesterday on the 90th birthday of one of my favorite Presidents, Ronald Reagan, I introduced legislation that will honor two of my most favorite Presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

My legislation, the Washington-Lincoln Recognition Act of 2001, will accomplish two goals: first, my bill will correct a long-standing misconception regarding the Federal holiday honoring Washington's birthday, which in law is designated Washington's Birthday, but which is erroneously called President's Day by many since a 1971 Nixon proclamation.

Second, my legislation urges our President to issue a proclamation each year recognizing the anniversary of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln. Although this does not create a new Federal holiday, I believe it will serve to bring this great leader the recognition he deserves. At the present time,

there is no official Federal recognition of President Lincoln's birthday.

As I have always said, when you honor everyone, you honor no one. Simply celebrating a generic President's Day diminishes the accomplishments of great Presidents like Washington and Lincoln and rewards the mediocrity of others.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue and the passage of the Washington-Lincoln Recognition Act of 2001.

BUYING OUR WAY INTO BANKRUPTCY

(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 trade deficit is at \$10 billion a week, \$40 billion a month, a half trillion dollars a year. Unbelievable. Japan continues to take \$60 billion out of our economy a year, and China is now taking over \$100 billion a year out of America, and both Japan and China continue to keep American products out.

Now, if that is not enough to neuter your dragon, China has missiles pointed at us.

Beam me up. A Nation that buys more than they sell will go bankrupt, and a Nation that allows illegal trade destroys all American industry.

I yield back the bankruptcy of America's steel industry. Day after day the filings continue to mount up.

HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RURAL HEALTH CARE COALITION

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE) in highlighting the importance of a caucus here in this Congress, the Rural Health Care Coalition. It is a group of us, 160 strong, both Republicans and Democrats, who have come together to advance the cause on behalf of rural America and to make certain that our constituents, our citizens across this country, can access health care, regardless of where they live.

I would encourage my colleagues, the new Members of Congress and those who have not considered belonging to our organization, to do so, for the purpose of educating ourselves, advocating our positions with other Members of Congress and leveraging our votes.

We would encourage our urban colleagues to join us as well, because many of them have very similar issues, as our constituents try to obtain the health care necessary.

I commend the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) and thank him for his leadership of this organization over the last 2 years and look forward to work-

ing with my colleague from North Carolina for the next two.

CLOSING THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE OF RACE RELATIONS

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

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, how in the world can a President who lost the African American vote, the Latino vote, the Asian American vote and the popular vote shut down the Presidential Office of Race Relations?

I thought George W. Bush wanted to change the tone in Washington. Or maybe changing the tone to President Bush means stifling minority voices. I hope not.

Our President confided to us that he is just a "white guy Republican." Well, we know that. But all of America is not white or Republican, and he has got to serve us too. He said he would be President for all Americans. Our President needs to listen to America's minorities and give us a chance to be heard.

The Office of Race Relations was an effort on the part of the previous President to allow minority voices to be heard. This is not a good move to restore healing in America or to allow this administration to bridge the racial divide. It sends a terrible message to whites and minorities who care about racial healing in this country.

I hope the President and his advisers will reconsider this action.

ENSURING TAX CUTS STRENGTHENS AMERICA

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, we are now considering the question of tax relief: What kind of tax relief should we have? How far should we go to stimulate the economy?

It strikes me, Mr. Speaker, that we have heard a lot of bragging out of the White House for the last 7 years that the 1993 tax increase was part of the reason that we have had such a good economy. But now I see nobody, nobody on that side of the aisle or anywhere else, suggesting that we should have a tax increase now to stimulate the economy. It is ridiculous.

The question is, how do we have some kind of tax cuts that are going to help keep this economy strong? One of the greatest contributors to the surplus or overtaxation is the Social Security tax. That is where most of the surplus has come from. The challenge is—how do we use that money, how do we save that money—because we are going to need it starting in 2010 when the baby boomers retire. The challenge is great.

I urge the American people and this body to become familiar with the debate on how do we give the kind of tax