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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians, Etchmiadzin, Armenia, offered the following prayer:

Almighty Lord and God, light to all nations, help us walk in Your light to advance the cause of freedom and human dignity in America, where democracy has grown strong over two centuries, and in Armenia, a new republic with strong hopes, and to make wise decisions of law on behalf of real people and real pain.

Lord, bless the American people and their servants who bear the privilege and burden of leadership. Also bless the Armenian people who are celebrating the 1700th anniversary of their ancestors' proclamation of Christianity as a state religion in Armenia. Unite the diverse peoples of the world into one sacred family, that we might share our stories and dreams in Your Holy Name.

For to You is glory, power, and honor, always and unto the ages of ages. 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GIBBONS 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill and concurrent resolutions of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1727. An act to amend the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 to provide for consistent treatment of survivor benefits for public safety officers killed in the line of duty.

H. Con. Res. 76. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the East Front of the Capitol Grounds for performances sponsored by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

H. Con. Res. 79. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

H. Con. Res. 87. Concurrent resolution authorizing the 2001 District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run to be run through the Capitol Grounds.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed concurrent resolutions of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 40. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the designation of the week of May 20, 2001, as "National Emergency Medical Services Week".

S. Con. Res. 41. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Book Festival.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 105-292, as amended by Public Law 106-55, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, reappoints Michael K. Young, of Washington, D.C., to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 106-554, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore and upon the recommendation of the Democratic Leader, appoints the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) to the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Education Foundation.

WELCOME TO HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to come to the floor today and help welcome His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians. Welcome to the U.S. House of Representatives.

I thank His Holiness for offering such a wonderful prayer. I also want to thank the House chaplain for allowing the opportunity to celebrate this very special occasion.

His Holiness Karekin II is the 132nd in a continuous line of pontiffs of the Armenian Church dating back to the 4th century. As the chief shepherd of the world's 7 million Apostolic Christians, Catholicos Karekin II administers the Armenian Church from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin located in the Republic of Armenia.

This year marks the 1700th anniversary of Armenia's conversion to Christianity. Armenians throughout America have waited with great anticipation for this special visit in celebration of this extraordinary anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, I join all Armenian Americans and Armenian supporters throughout the United States in thanking His Holiness for making this trip to America and being with us here today.

ARMENIA'S 1700TH ANNIVERSARY OF PROCLAIMING CHRISTIANITY AS OFFICIAL RELIGION

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to thank His Holiness Karekin II for providing this morning's prayer and for helping this House celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the

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world's first Christian nation, Armenia. It was 1700 years ago that the leader of the Kingdom of Armenia, the pagan King Drtd III, was baptized as a Christian and made the historic decision to proclaim Christianity as the official religion of the Armenian kingdom. It is the anniversary of this event that brings His Holiness to the United States this month.

I will be fortunate to join him at what should be one of the largest gatherings of Armenian Americans in New York City's Central Park this upcoming Memorial Day weekend.

His Holiness will also be the honored guest at an ecumenical prayer service next week at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank His Holiness for gracing this House with his presence this morning and for making this trip to the United States. It not only means a lot to me but to the millions of diaspora Armenians and Americans of other faiths who will have the opportunity to hear his words during this visit.

A CHILD'S SUCCESS IS DEPENDENT ON ABILITY TO READ

(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, a child's success in school and, indeed, in life is dependent upon his or her ability to read. Unfortunately, reading scores in most States have remained flat or even dropped over the last 8 years, and the reading achievement gap between white students and minority students has widened even further.

These disappointing results are yet more evidence that simply spending more money on education does not necessarily improve student achievement.

President Bush's Reading First Initiative gives States both the funds and the tools they need to eliminate the reading deficit. It focuses on effective proven methods of reading instruction based on proven scientific research.

Research continues to show that reading failure has devastating effects on self-esteem, social development, and opportunities for advanced education and meaningful employment. By funding effective reading instruction programs, President Bush's plan, H.R. 1, ensures that more children will receive the help they need before they fall further behind.

CHINA SHOULD OPEN DIALOGUE WITH TIBET

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, Monday evening a bipartisan group of us went to New York to welcome the democratically-elected President of Taiwan

Chen Shui-Bian. What a joy it was to see the leader of a country that was destitute and dictatorial just a few decades ago, and it is now a political democracy and one of the most successful economies on the face of this planet.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I welcome on behalf of scores of our colleagues across both sides of this aisle His Holiness the Dhali Lama, a man of remarkable moral authority, who speaks truth to power. I call on the Chinese Government in Beijing to begin a dialogue with this great leader so that the Tibetan people at long last can live, preserving their cultural and religious heritage.

The Dhali Lama honors us with his presence and all of us in this body are delighted to welcome him to the United States.

FATHER EMIL KAPAUN, A TRUE AMERICAN HERO

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

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true American hero, a priest, soldier and POW, Chaplain Emil Kapaun. Today, we remember that 50 years ago Father Kapaun died in a Communist POW camp during the Korean war.

A chaplain in the United States Army's Eighth Cavalry Regiment, Father Kapaun and his unit found themselves in a perilous situation on the Korean battlefield. A wounded soldier lay completely exposed and could not be accessed because of intense machine gun and small arms fire.

With total disregard for his personal safety, Father Kapaun went after the wounded man and successfully evacuated him, saving his life. Later, captured and as a prisoner of war, Father Kapaun continued to minister to his flock of fellow POWs. He encouraged and inspired others by his peaceful, courageous demeanor. He continually risked his health and life by giving all he had to his fellow soldiers.

Ultimately, these acts of selflessness contributed to his own untimely death.

So today on the 50th anniversary of his death, we honor his courage and reflect on the heroism and the spiritual devotion of this great man.

WITHOUT GOD HONORED BY OUR NATION, EVEN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WILL NOT SAVE US

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Arizona public schools will begin each day by reciting the Declaration of Independence. I applaud Arizona, but it is not enough.

America was founded on religious freedom, guaranteeing that there would not be one state-sponsored reli-

gion, but the Founders never intended to outlaw, to prohibit and to kill school prayer.

The Declaration of Independence was drafted to ensure rights, not to limit rights. All schools in America should have the right to allow school prayer if they should choose to do so, period. And America, without God, will not be saved by the Declaration of Independence.

I yield back the rape, murder, drugs, guns, and violence in America's schools.

MILLIONS IN AMERICA SUFFER FROM BLINDNESS

(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, over 1 million Americans are legally blind and 80 million Americans are at risk for developing diseases that potentially can cause blindness. Currently, more than 6 million Americans suffer from retinal degenerative diseases. In my State of Florida, an estimated 1 million people are affected by these problems.

My constituents, Ilana Lidsky and her husband Patrick McGuinn, have traveled to our Nation's Capitol today to learn about recent gene therapy that has actually given sight to Lancelot, a Briard dog born with a blinding genetic mutation. This recent National Eye Institute-supported research that has given sight to Lancelot holds promise for children born blind and for persons like Ilana and her siblings who suffer from retinitis pigmentosa, a disease that may lead to blindness.

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Today, eye and vision disorders cost society \$38 billion every year, and this cost will escalate unless existing research opportunities are vigorously pursued.

The Alliance for Eye and Vision Research and the Foundation Fighting Blindness are to be congratulated for their gene therapy research that will soon find a cure for blindness.

IN HONOR OF CAPTAIN G. RUSSELL BROWN

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Captain G. Russell Brown, a native of Astoria, Queens, New York. After almost 40 years of service, Captain Brown is retiring from serving our Nation in the United States Navy. During the course of his career, Captain Brown has been willing to make tremendous sacrifices for his country. He has given his life to service of his country in our Navy.

He entered the Navy in 1962 and began to work at the Hospital Corps