

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

School 2 years later. He served our Nation in Vietnam and after his return, he served posts in the Navy throughout the world. During the last 30 years, Captain Brown has served in California, Germany, Italy and Midway Island. Throughout that entire time, he has always been willing to sacrifice for his country.

Captain Brown, along with his wife, the former Gillian Ann Collett of Reading, England, has 2 daughters, Rebecca Evelyn and Heather Ann.

On behalf of the people he has served for so many years, I would like to thank him for his service to our Navy and our country. I would also like to offer his family the best of luck as he moves into life outside of our Armed Forces.

PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR INDONESIA

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the government of Indonesia to ensure that the roots of democracy are firmly established so the Indonesian people can enjoy peace and prosperity now and in the future. President Wahid should be commended for the steps he has taken to help build a foundation for democracy, and other leaders in Indonesia should be encouraged to build on that foundation.

Unfortunately, there are individuals and organizations who desire to foment violence, bloodshed and destruction in communities in the Malukus, Aceh, Irian Jaya, Padang and other regions. I urge the government of Indonesia to bring to justice those responsible for recent and past criminal attacks against the Indonesian people and to assure that those criminal leaders are prosecuted, especially Malaskar Jihad, who committed violence against Muslims and Christians in the Malukus.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government of Indonesia to ensure that perpetrators of crime in Indonesia are punished for their crimes and brought to justice.

ENERGY CRISIS LOOMS AS REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION DOES NOTHING

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we are today, I think, at about the 120th day of the Republican energy follies play in this House.

When the President became President in January, everybody knew there was a crisis in California and on the West Coast generally. We met with the Vice President, who has been appointed as the Energy Czar, and explained the problems. Republicans and Democrats sat with him. The Vice President looked us in the eye and said, this is

not a national problem, this is a State problem. We are not going to do anything.

Now, they have come out with a sort of weak, namby-pamby plan for energy that is going to go on 10 years from now, but does not deal with the crisis now.

The Senate has now entered the stage, stage left or stage right, if you will. They have come on the stage and they have said, we are going to pass tax cuts. The President says we need those tax cuts because we have the energy crisis. What they mean is, we are going to reduce the taxes so that people can pay more to energy companies.

Mr. Speaker, it is wrong. We should stop them.

NOMINATION OF TED OLSON SHOULD PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY

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

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, just as with Robert Bork, Clarence Thomas and most recently John Ashcroft, Washington's blood sport of lies, rumors and innuendo is in full throttle.

Aided by their liberal friends at The Washington Post, many Democrats have, once again, cast the truth aside and are focused on destroying the name and reputation of a fine American. In their eyes, Solicitor General nominee Ted Olson is guilty of one thing: He is conservative. The fact that he is perhaps the most qualified and well-respected individual ever nominated for this important post becomes irrelevant. His attackers are intent on punishing Ted Olson for his work on the Florida recount case, on destroying the spirit of bipartisanship promoted by President Bush, and on regaining the majority in Congress through fear and intimidation. They must not succeed.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve to have a Justice Department that they can trust to faithfully execute and uphold the laws of the land. We need men like John Ashcroft and Ted Olson to revitalize and restore the luster to this most important department. Let us call off the attack, calm the waters and allow the nomination of this fine American citizen to proceed without delay.

THE NORTHERN MARIANAS DELEGATE ACT

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, the House prides itself on being the House of the people and all of the people, and, indeed, all Americans are represented here, most fully through representatives, some 435, and the rest, somewhat, through delegates, numbering

five. But there is one group of Americans that is not represented at all, and those are the people of the Northern Marianas.

Today, I am reintroducing the Northern Marianas Delegate Act, an Act to provide for a nonvoting delegate to the House of Representatives to represent the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. It is important that the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas be accorded representation in Congress, not just for fair and just representation of an American community, whose interests are directly affected by the actions of Congress, but more importantly, for what the people of the CNMI can contribute to the Nation through their delegate. A delegate for the Northern Marianas will advance their cause and work to resolve situations and conditions as they develop, not subsequently.

We should leave no other citizens behind or alienate them from a law-making and policymaking process. Perpetual denial of a delegate for the CNMI is a denial of the basic right to represent oneself.

THE TIME IS NOT FOR PARTISAN SNIPING

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, liberal extremists in Washington want to adopt the California approach on energy and make it national policy. That is kind of a head-in-the-sand approach. They do not like coal, they do not like oil, they do not like nuclear power. They want everybody to be driving cars that have windmills on top of them or something like that. I am not exactly sure where their reality lands.

But the reality is, in California, demand for energy exploded over 30 percent, and yet they would not allow new power plants to be built. As a result, they had the same pollution-causing, outdated power plants now owned by the government. Well, does that not make us feel comfortable?

Mr. Speaker, the time is not for partisan sniping. The time is to say, gee whiz, maybe California did make some mistakes. It is probably not good to model national policy after them. Let us be realistic. We do need alternative energy sources. We do need research. We do need conservation. But guess what? We cannot get off of oil tomorrow. We have to keep refineries open.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Democrats will join the Bush administration in looking for a solution.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD ROMERO

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor an individual, a friend, and pay