The Senate recedes.

From the Committee on Armed Services, for consideration of the Senate Bill and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

BOB STUMP,
DUNCAN HUNTER,
JAMES V. HANSEN,
CURT WELDON,
JIM SAXTON,
JOHN M. MCHUGH,
TERRY EVERETT,
ROSCOE G. BARTLETT,
HOWARD ''BUCK'' MCKEON,
J.C. WATTS, Jr.,
MAC THORNBERRY,
SAXBY CHAMBLISS,
IKE SKELTON,
SOLOMON P. ORTIZ,
LANE EVANS,
NEIL ABERCROMBIE,
MARTIN T. MEEHAN,
ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD,
THOMAS ALLEN,
VIC SNYDER,

From the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for consideration of secs. 304, 305, 1123, 3151, and 3157 of the Senate bill, and secs. 341, 342, 509, and 584 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

MICHAEL N. CASTLE,
JOHNNY ISAKSON,
GEORGE MILLER,

From the Committee on Government Reform, for consideration of secs. 564, 622, 803, 813, 901, 1044, 1047, 1051, 1065, 1075, 1102, 1111–1113, 1124–1126, 2832, 3141, 3144, and 3153 of the Senate bill, and secs. 333, 519, 588, 802, 803, 811–819, 1101, 1103–1108, 1110, and 3132 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

DAN BURTON,
DAVE WELDON,
HENRY A. WAXMAN,

Provided that Mr. Tom Davis of Virginia is appointed in lieu of Mr. Weldon of Florida for consideration of secs. 803 and 2832 of the Senate bill, and secs. 333 and 803 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

TOM DAVIS,

Provided that Mr. Horn is appointed in lieu of Mr. Weldon of Florida for consideration of secs. 811–819 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

STEPHEN HORN,

From the Committee on House Administration, for consideration of secs. 572, 574–577, and 579 of the Senate bill, and sac. 552 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

BOB NEY,
JOHN L. MICA,

From the Committee on International Relations, for consideration of secs. 331, 333, 1201–1205, and 1211–1218 of the Senate bill, and secs. 1011, 1201, 1202, 1205, and 1209, title XIII, and sec. 3133 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

HENRY HYDE,
BEN GILMAN,
TOM LANTOS,

From the Committee on the Judiciary, for consideration of secs. 821, 1066, and 3151 of the Senate bill, and secs. 323 and 818 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER,
LAMAR SMITH,

From the Committee on Resources, for consideration of secs. 601, 663, 2823, and 3171–3181 of the Senate bill, and secs. 601, 1042, 2841, 2845, 2861–2863, and 2865 and title XXIX of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

JIM GIBBONS,
GEORGE RADANOVICH,

Provided that Mr. Udall of Colorado is appointed in lieu of Mr. Rahall for consideration of secs. 3171–3181 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference:

MARK UDALL,

From the Committee on Science, for consideration of secs. 1071 and 1124 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference:

SHERWOOD BOEHLERT,
NICK SMITH,
RALPH M. HALL,

Provided that Mr. Ehlers is appointed in lieu of Mr. Smith of Michigan for consideration of sec. 1124 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference:

VERNON J. EHLERS,

From the Committee on Small Business, for consideration of secs. 822–824 and 1068 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference:

DONALD A. MANZULLO,
LARRY COMBEST,

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of secs. 563, 601, and 1076 of the Senate bill, and secs. 543, 544, 601, 1049, and 1053 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

DON YOUNG,
FRANK A. LOBIONDO,
CORRINE BROWN,

Provided that Mr. Pascrell is appointed in lieu of Ms. Brown of Florida for consideration of sec. 1049 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

BILL PASCRELL, Jr.,

From the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for consideration of secs. 538, 539, 573, 651, 717, and 1064 of the Senate bill, and sec. 641 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
(except sec. 641 of House amendment and secs. 539 and 651 of Senate bill),
MIKE BILIRAKIS,

Managers on the Part of the House.

CARL LEVIN,
TED KENNEDY,
JOSEPH LIEBERMAN,
MAX CLELAND,
MARY LANDRIEU,
JACK REED,
DANIEL K. AKAKA,
BILL NELSON,
BEN NELSON,
JEAN CARNAHAN,
MARK DAYTON,
JEFF BINGAMAN,
JOHN WARNER,
STROM THURMOND,
BOB SMITH,
JIM INHOFE,
RICK SANTORUM,
PAT ROBERTS,
WAYNE ALLARD,
TIM HUTCHINSON,
JEFF SESSIONS,
SUSAN COLLINS,
JIM BUNNING,

Managers on the Part of the Senate.

SETTING ASIDE TIME FOR PRAYER OR QUIET REFLECTION ON BEHALF OF OUR NATION DURING THIS TIME OF STRUGGLE AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to take just a few moments simply because on November 13 this House debated a concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 239, and the House actually passed the resolution on November 15 by a vote of 297 to 125, with one Member voting present.

I would like to read to the House what the resolution said, and then I want to give the reason why I am on the floor tonight for these few minutes.

The resolution said, ''Expressing the sense of Congress that schools in the United States should set aside a sufficient period of time to allow children to pray for or quietly reflect on behalf of the Nation during this time of struggle against the forces of internal terrorism.''

Mr. Speaker, I was a little bit surprised the night of November 13. I should not say ''disappointed,'' because the House is the people's House, and all of us who serve here have the privilege to our own opinions and we can express those opinions. However, on that night, three Members of the Democratic Party came to speak in opposition of House Concurrent Resolution 239: the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), all three of whom I have great respect for; and I acknowledged that night during the debate that I did have respect for each one as a very fine Member of Congress. We just disagreed on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. There is absolutely no question about that. That night, the three Members who were opposed to House Concurrent Resolution 239 mentioned seven different groups that were opposed to this resolution, one being the People for the American Way. Well, I was not surprised with that, quite frankly. The National PTA, I was very surprised about, and I want to talk about that in just a moment.

The third group to be opposed to this nonbinding resolution but sense of the Congress that children would have a moment of prayer or a moment of reflection during this period of war with the terrorists was Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Quite frankly, I was not surprised by that one either.

Next was the Interfaith Alliance.

The fifth group opposed to the resolution was the American Jewish Committee of Washington, D.C.

The sixth group in opposition was Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

Seventh was the Baptist Joint Committee.

I would say that the one I was really disappointed in was the National PTA, and I am going to read a couple of sentences from their letter of opposition.

The National PTA, the lady's name, I believe she is the President, Shirley

Igo, President of the National PTA, she wrote a note in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 239, to, again, the sense of the Congress encouraging that children during this period of war, and I know a lot of our children, Mr. Speaker, are confused by what is happening with terrorism, the murder of so many American people on September 11, the fact that many of our men and women in uniform over in Afghanistan have children here in this country. So the Congress felt, and, again, it did pass it, that children should be encouraged in the schools to have a moment of prayer or reflection.

But the National PTA, Mrs. Igo, says about the resolution, ''Furthermore, because the legislative intent is clearly to endorse religious expression, it does not conform with current constitutional standards.''

Mr. Speaker, that is not what it did. What it said was that the children of America should have a moment of prayer or a moment of reflection. But, again, my point is, I am very disappointed in the National PTA, which is supposed to strengthen families, encourage education and encourage families to be together. Why they would take this type of position, I do not know. But, again, I was very surprised and disappointed that they would.

Mr. Speaker, another group that I really should not be surprised about is the Americans United for Separation of Church and State. That is Reverend Barry Lynn, and he and I disagree on a lot of issues, most of the time, quite frankly.

Let me read one or two sentences from his letter in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 239: ''This misguided proposal should not be endorsed by the House of Representatives.''

Well, I am pleased to tell Mr. Lynn that it was endorsed by the House of Representatives, 297 to 125.

The second statement he made: ''Mandatory time for classroom prayer on a specific topic.''

Mr. Speaker, it did not do that. It said that the children should have a moment of prayer, whatever faith they might be. Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, or even Muslim, they should have that moment, which we have seen happen since September 11.

Also he made a couple of other points that I am not going to take the time to make reference on.

The reason I wanted to come down on the floor again tonight was to say ''thank you'' to the Members of the House. Many Democrats, including the leader of the minority party, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), voted for this resolution.

I want to read for the record a paper from an eighth grader from my district, a young lady named Rose Ormand, who wrote a paper called ''In Defense of a Little Prayer.'' Ms. Ormand is in the eighth grade. She attends E.B. Aycock Middle School in Greenville, North Carolina. I want to read this in its entirety.

''How would the athletes at your school feel if all athletic activities were prohibited based on the fact that not all students are athletic and some students even feel uncomfortable with athletics? Wouldn't you consider that unjust and absurd? Can you imagine baseball, a sport considered as American as mom's apple pie, being removed from schools because a few are offended? Well, as absurd as that might seem, there is an activity which is even more historically valued than baseball that is being prohibited in our public schools today. That activity prohibited today within the walls of our schools is prayer. A student's right to pray in school in any manner should be upheld and encouraged. First of all, our country has definitely been founded upon Christian principles from its very beginning. When we compare the social and moral climate of the schools when prayer was part of a regular school day to that of our present day, there is quite a difference. Finally, if we trace the roots of public education back to its original purpose, it just doesn't make any sense that our public school system today is a contradiction. Prayer in our public schools may very well be an area we need to look at again as it is so much more important than baseball.

''First of all, our country and its government were clearly built on Christian principles. The arrival of the pilgrims in the New World seeking religious freedom was the birth of our great country. In the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment declares that, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' Every day the United States Senate and House of Representatives begin their Congressional day with prayer, yet in the same nation, public school students are not allowed to have prayer. While the Members of Congress stood on the steps of the Capitol and petitioned God almighty for his help after the attack on America, public school students were not even permitted to join in the National Day of Prayer declared by the President. It seems to me that students and teachers alike have to shed their constitutional right of the free exercise of prayer when they walk through the public school doors.

''Secondly, the social and moral climate when prayer was permitted in school was surprisingly better than now when prayer is prohibited. The Regent's prayer, prayed every morning in the classroom, was 'Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon You, and we beg Your blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country.' On June 25, 1962, the government removed God from public schools and that prayer was never prayed again. The four parts of the Regent's prayer were God's blessings on the students, our parents, our teachers and our country, and they seemed to be the area God's hedge of protections fell. The first area was the students, and since 1962 teenage homicide rose three hundred percent. The second area was the parents, and also since 1962 the divorce rate went up fifty-two percent. The SAT scores plummeted, frustrating the teachers, and the hedge of protection fell from our country as the very next year our President was killed. A coincidence? I don't think so. The only way any of these statistics are going to change will be if prayer is allowed in our school system.

''Some reading this may say that schools are not the place for prayer because they are institutions for learning. Let me refer you to one of the founders of public education within our Nation, Benjamin Rush. He wrote and spoke about educational topics frequently and he believed that education should work along with the principles of democracy. He wrote a prodigious essay entitled, 'Thoughts Upon the Mode of Educational Proper in a Republic.' Rush included in his essay that Christian principles should be taught throughout the student's education.

□ 2000

''Funny, isn't it, that now God isn't even allowed where once he was the main focus? Or maybe it's not so funny after all.

''In conclusion, should students be allowed to pray as part of every day school life. Since God was the main reason America was founded, doesn't it make sense that the heritage of this country should continue? Also, if we had prayer back in the school system, our schools, homes, and country would be a lot better off. School now is so different than what it was originally intended to be, and the strength and quality the schools had then could return only if God was let back in the school system. If you really believe in the power of prayer, then call your Congressman and ask for prayer to be returned to public schools now!''

Mr. Speaker, I read that again because they are the words of an eighth-grader in my district, and I think she did a great job of expressing herself and the fact that this Nation is a Nation founded on Judeo-Christian principles.

Let me make just a couple of other points. Again, I wanted to come to the floor because I was so disappointed that the National PTA and some of the other groups that I read about earlier that will be in the RECORD were opposed to this nonbinding resolution, the Sense of the Congress, that the Congress would say to the schools throughout this Nation and also say to the students that you may have a moment of prayer or a moment to reflect.

Just a couple of other points and then, Mr. Speaker, I will bring this to a close.

I found it very interesting that William Raspberry recently wrote an editorial and the title was ''Good-Faith Arguments for School Prayer.'' Now, this was in The Washington Post on November 26 of the year 2001, this year. Mr. Raspberry quotes Kevin J. Hasson, President of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, I will use these quotes

very briefly. They are short and to the point. Hasson is responding to Chancellor Harold O. Levy's decision for New York schools to accommodate the religious exercise of Muslim students during Ramadan. Hasson says, ''A public school system that pretends to have a comprehensive education but resolutely says nothing about religion for 12 years is not comprehensive at all. Indeed, it sends a powerful message to our children that religion is at best an optional aspect of their human nature and, in doing so, it lies about who and what we are. When a public school sets aside space for children who wish to pray, it sends the opposite message: that faith is a natural part of life.''

''But doesn't Levy's action violate the separation clause of the first amendment? Not as Hasson sees it. The framers of the amendment never intended to hobble religion,'' he argues, ''only to avoid the establishment of a particular religion. The people who wrote the Bill of Rights hired a congressional chaplain,'' he said. ''A few days after writing his famous letter on the wall of separation, Thomas Jefferson attended Sunday churches in the House of Representatives.''

Mr. Speaker, I want to include Mr. Raspberry's entire editorial for the RECORD, along with the letter from Rose Ormand.

IN DEFENSE OF A LITTLE PRAYER

(By Rose Ormond, Persuasive Hall 4)

How would the athletes at your school feel if all athletic activities were prohibited based upon the fact that not all students are athletic and some students even feel uncomfortable with athletics? Wouldn't you consider that unjust and absurd? Can you imagine baseball, a sport considered as American as mom's apple pie, being removed from schools because a few are offended? Well as absurd as that may seem, there is an activity which is ever more historically valued than baseball that is being prohibited in our public schools today. That activity prohibited today within the walls of our schools is prayer. A student's right to pray in school, in any manner, should be upheld and encouraged. First of all, our country has definitely been founded upon Christian principles from its very beginning. When we compare the social and moral climate of the schools when prayer was a part of a regular school day to that of our present day, there is quite a difference. Finally, if we trace the roots of public education back to its original purpose, it just doesn't make sense that our public school system today is a contradiction. Prayer in our public schools may very well be an area we need to look at again as it is so more important than baseball!

First of all, our country and its government were clearly built on Christian principles. The arrival of the pilgrims in the New World seeking religious freedom was the birth of our great country. In the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment declares that, ''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .''. Everyday the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives begin their congressional day with prayer yet, in the same nation, public school students are not allowed to have prayer. While the members of Congress stood on the steps of the capital and petitioned God Almighty for His help after the ''Attack on America,'' public school students were not even permitted to join in on the National Day of Prayer declared by the President. It seems to me that students and teachers alike have to shed their constitutional right of the free exercise of prayer when they walk through the public school doors.

Secondly, the social and moral climate when prayer was permitted in schools was surprisingly better than now, when prayer is prohibited. The Regent's prayer, prayed every morning in the classroom was ''Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon You, and we beg Your blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country.'' On June 25, 1962 the government removed God from public schools and that prayer was never prayed again. The four parts of the Regent's prayer were God's blessings on the students, our parents, our teachers, and our country and they seem to be the areas God's hedge of protections fell. The first area was the students, and since 1962 teenage homicide rose three hundred percent. The second area was the parents, and also since 1962 the divorce rate went up fifty-two percent. The SAT scores plummeted frustrating the teachers, and the hedge of protection fell from our country as the very next year our president was killed. Coincidence? I don't think so! The only way any of these statistics are going to change will be if prayer is allowed in our school system.

Some reading this may say, that schools are not the place for prayer because they are only institutions for learning. Let me refer you to one of the founders of public education within our nation, Benjamin Rush. He wrote and spoke about educational topics frequently, and he believed that education should work along with the principles of democracy. He wrote a prodigious essay entitled, ''Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic.'' Rush included in his essay that Christian principles should be taught throughout the student's education. Funny isn't it that now God isn't even allowed where once He was the main focus? Or maybe it's not so funny after all.

In conclusion, students should be allowed to pray as part of everyday school life. Since God was the main reason America was founded, doesn't it make sense that the heritage of this country should continue? Also, if we had prayer back in the school system, our schools, homes, and country would be a lot better off. School now is so different than what it was originally intended to be, and the strength and quality the schools had then could return only if God was let back in the school system. If you really believe in the power of prayer, then call your state Congressman and ask for prayer to be returned to public schools now!

GOOD-FAITH ARGUMENT FOR SCHOOL PRAYER

(By William Raspberry)

One of the arguments against prayer in public schools has been that it opens the door for religious zealots to instill their version of religion into the minds of vulnerable children. So wouldn't it be ironic if the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks launched by the world's most zealous theocrats wound up helping the advocates of school prayer?

It's easy to imagine the possibility. No matter the country's general lukewarmness about things religious, Americans have been praying all over the place since the attacks: in Yankee Stadium, in special prayer rallies organized by members of Congress, in parks and playgrounds and, yes, in public schools. And there's been hardly a peep of objection.

And not only that: The New York City public schools have moved to accommodate the religious exercise of Muslim students during Ramadan. What makes this significant is that no one can argue that Chancellor Harold O. Levy's accommodation amounts to a constitutionally impermissible ''establishment of religion.''Is this a watershed in the church-state wars?

Kevin J. Hasson, president of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, hopes so. At the very least, he says, it may get us thinking rationally about the place of religion in public life.

''Every culture, our included, has religious elements,'' he told me last week. ''And that's because every culture worthy of the name reflects human nature in all its richness—and does so publicly. We don't live the most significant aspects of our lives in private. We don't smuggle babies home from the maternity ward. We don't usually elope in dead of night or furtively bury our dead. Why should expressions of belief be different?''

But what of the coercive effect of religion in public places—and particularly in public places for children?

The answer, says Hasson, whose organization has defended religious expression on the part of a huge range of faiths, is ''not to blanket this facet of our humanity under a layer of secularism but to let a thousand flowers bloom.'' That's why he likes the New York City accommodation of Muslim students.

''A public school system that pretends to have a comprehensive education but resolutely says nothing about religion for 12 years is not comprehensive at all. Indeed, it sends a powerful message to our children that religion is at best an optional aspect of their human nature—and in doing so, it lies about who and what we are. When a public school sets aside space for children who wish to pray, it sends the opposite message: that faith is a natural part of life. Levy wasn't pushing Islam; he was sending a message of respect.''

But doesn't Levy's action violate the separation clause of the First Amendment? Not as Hasson sees it. The Framers of the amendment never intended to hobble religion, he argues—only to avoid the establishment of a particular religion. ''The people who wrote the Bill of Rights hired a congressional chaplain,'' he said. ''A few days after writing his famous letter on the wall of separation, Thomas Jefferson attended Sunday church services in the House of Representatives.''

But surely Hasson will acknowledge the Taliban stand as incontrovertible evidence of what happens when true believers take over public places. These fundamentalists are so certain they know the will of God that they see themselves as entitled—indeed as compelled—to root out nonbelievers as the enemies of God. And not all the fundamentalists are Muslims or ''over there.''

It's a matter to which the lawyer obviously has given some though. ''The religious fundamentalists and the secular fundamentalists make the same mistake,'' he says. ''They separate truth from freedom. For Osama bin Laden, freedom must be sacrificed for the sake of truth. For our secular fundamentalists, any claims of truth must be abandoned in the interest of freedom.

''Both are wrong, and I think a few more people may be starting to see it.''

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, now as I begin my closing in the next couple of minutes, let me say to those groups that were opposed to the resolution that the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) will be offering legislation that will be binding, if it should pass, and I intend to support him. I know many Members on the floor tonight, including the Speaker pro tempore, as well as the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), who will

be speaking shortly, will be supporting the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK).

Mr. Speaker, prior to 1962, we had prayer in this Nation. I think the children of this country, and since September 11, I think there have been more adults in the churches, the synagogues, the mosques, than there have been in a long, long time. Again, for these groups that are supposed to help educate our children like the National PTA, I was very disappointed that they would oppose a resolution that was only the sense of the Congress. When governors, when the President, when other leaders of State and local and national government are asking people to pray for America and to pray for our men and women in uniform, I just felt like I needed to come to the floor and say ''thank you'' to those who voted for this resolution on November 15. Again, it passed with 297, only 125 in opposition. They are the kind of messages, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, we need to be sending to the American people, because every survey I have seen over the last 2 years, better than 70 percent of the American people, say they would like to see prayer returned to the school systems of America.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman from Georgia will be speaking shortly and I would like to help him if he would like for me to do so.

Mr. Speaker, let me, if I might, stay on the floor and yield any remaining time I might have. I think I might have had an hour, is that correct?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Michigan). The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) had 30 minutes, of which he had approximately 13 minutes remaining. The balance of the Majority Leader's hour can be controlled by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR PRAYER IN OUR SCHOOLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 43 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.

I wanted to say to the gentleman from North Carolina, I was debating one of the school prayer debates that we have so often here in Washington with a gentleman named Barry Lynn who allegedly is a preacher, but one of these preachers who has no church. He heads a group called Americans for Separation of the Church and State, not exactly a grass-roots organization; I think a top-down Washington elitist kind of organization, and he is against any form of school prayer.

I said, okay, let us go to Columbine, a horrible tragedy, 12 kids are dead in Colorado. Should the kids in that school be allowed to pray for their fellow students who died? And he said, no. I said, well, should they be allowed to pray immediately when the attack was taking place? There was one group of kids who were clustered, I think, in the back of a biology lab with a teacher. At that moment, gun shots were going up and down the halls, people were screaming, everybody was terrified. Should they have been allowed to have a corporate prayer, that group of clustered kids together? And he said, no, absolutely not.

Then, the gentleman from North Carolina may remember, months after the Columbine tragedy, the school was replacing the bullet marks that had popped the concrete cinderblocks that are in the hallways of the school, and they were putting 4-by-4 inch tiles and doing them in memory of the students who had died, and I said, should the families be allowed to quote scripture or allude to scripture? And he said, absolutely not.

The point that I am making is so many of these people who are simply trying to say that they are against school prayer are, in fact, far more beyond that. They are antiChristian, they are theology, they are anti-Semitic. It is not really a matter of: we just want to be fair for everybody and make everybody comfortable. That is not the case at all. They are just very, very mean-spirited, antireligion. So I really appreciate the gentleman from North Carolina for bringing it up.

I want to point out to folks that as the gentleman's father served in Congress, I know that he was here during a period of time when there was a little bit more openness for prayer, so certainly the gentleman brings a perspective of history to the debate.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield for a moment, I really appreciate his comments. He has been out front on a number of issues that I think are really important to the foundation of this country.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I do not want to just make my comments about Reverend Barry Lynn or the lady with the PTA, but the children are America's future, and the children have to be given every opportunity. That is the reason I read the paper by the young lady, Ms. Ormand, Rose Ormand from my district, because these are young people. They are America's future leaders. She had those kinds of strong feelings about prayer, and I know that she is just an example of one of millions in this country that feel that they should have the opportunity to have that moment of prayer. So as I said, and then I will yield back, but I am looking forward to the debate next year on the Istook bill, and I know the gentleman from Georgia has been on that bill before. I look forward to joining him.

I was very pleased, I would say to the gentleman from Georgia, when I looked at the vote and about 80-some Democrats voted for the resolution, for which I was pleased, and very pleased that the leader of the minority, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) voted with us on that resolution, so I thought that was progress.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I think that is the case. This has broad bipartisan support. It is a mainstream reflection of America. Certainly there are people on the fringe who maybe want to turn schools into theological institutions. I think that the main reason I send my kids to school, and I know the gentleman does too, I want the basics, reading, writing and arithmetic. It is not up to my schoolteachers to make my children more moral or more spiritual. Then there are other people on the other extreme that do not want any pretense to us. If we look behind us, and I only wish the cameras could show it, but the words in the United States Capitol, 10 feet from where I stand, ''In God We Trust,'' right above the American flag, right above the Speaker pro tempore, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. ROGERS).

What do we do every single morning as Democrats and Republicans and Independents and staff members, Federal Government employees, no less, in this House Chamber, we open and always have opened with a prayer, and we have Christian, we have Jewish, we have Muslim, we have whoever Members invite that day to give the opening prayer. So the hypocrisy and the inconsistency is incredible.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to say finally, prior to September 11, 70 percent of Americans surveyed said that they pray regularly. After September 11, 97 percent. America has gotten back down on its knees, and I am glad that we have an administration that acknowledges the role of religion and spiritual matters in their decisionmaking.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Amen.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, George Bush has never strayed from that.

In this House since September 11 we have had lots of challenges and the House has moved quickly for a number of reasons to give the President the tools he needs to fight the war and to fight terrorism and to secure the airlines. But the House has consistently done a lot more work than just focusing on the war effort. We support the war effort on a bipartisan basis. We think it is very important to do that. But there are a lot of issues domestically where it is just hard for me to go along with the liberal, big-spending Democrat models that we have seen over the years. I am glad that Speaker HASTERT has been a workhorse. This team in Congress has done a lot of things that unfortunately we cannot get our friends in the other body to do. I will show my colleague a chart of some of the House accomplishments this year.

We passed an energy package. Now what are gas prices doing in North