

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds all Members to refrain from characterizing the action or inaction of the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY PELOSI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today in celebration of the official swearing-in of the Democratic whip, my colleague and friend, NANCY PELOSI.

Today, we celebrate a historic event. NANCY PELOSI is the highest-ranking woman ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Her success is also a tribute to the women who came before her. From the election of Representative Jeanette Rankin to the House in 1916, to today, when a record number of 75 women serve in the 107th Congress, women Members of Congress have made significant contributions to the legislative accomplishments of the House and Senate. They have served with distinction as chairs of committees and subcommittees, members of our most powerful committees, and in leadership positions within the Democratic caucus and the Republican conference.

But, today is notable because NANCY has been elevated by her peers to one of the top two positions that the history books recognize as the key party leadership posts. So it is fitting that we gather today to recognize the leadership exemplified by our new Democratic whip, NANCY PELOSI, and to celebrate the accomplishments that have earned this great distinction.

NANCY was a leader in California and in the California Democratic party for many years before her election to Congress in 1987. In many ways, her political experience provided a model for me in becoming the first Mexican-American woman to be elected to Congress, and I have appreciated the many ways she has supported me both before and after I joined her here in the House in 1993.

She has also provided additional leadership to me as I have followed her to the House Appropriations Committee. I believe it is NANCY's service on that committee that demonstrated her leadership abilities to the members of our caucus. First, NANCY serves on the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee, which may recognize as the most problematic appropriations bill passed by Congress each year. The bill's long list of worthy programs necessitate hard work and numerous, bipartisan compromises in order to produce the final version that is enacted into law. NANCY's contribution to that process each year has been essential in protecting health and education programs that benefit millions of Americans.

In addition, as ranking Democrat on the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, NANCY has been the Democratic floor manager for that bill since 1995. From that position, she has been instrumental in advocating our caucus's position with regard to programs that address global poverty, international family planning, and global environmental issues while working with her Republican chairman to fashion a com-

promise bill that can withstand scrutiny by the House. She has worked uncomplainingly in the spirit of compromise each year to produce legislation the House can support.

NANCY's race for whip pitted her against one of the Democratic Caucus' most active and distinguished members, our colleague STENY HOYER, who has been one of my mentors on the Appropriations Committee. STENY's outstanding credentials as our former caucus chair, as a chairman and now ranking member of the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Subcommittee, and as chief recruiter for our party of congressional challengers, made the race for whip a difficult decision for everyone in our caucus. But we all recognized that with choices such as NANCY and STENY for this coveted leadership position, the Democratic Caucus, as well as the entire House, would be well-served by the victor. NANCY's tough but successful race against STENY represented another example of leadership—not just of her ability to mobilize the diverse elements of our caucus, but also her ability to organize in the systematic manner essential to the success of any party's whip.

As Californians and as members of the Appropriations Committee, NANCY and I share many experiences. But we also share a distinction enjoyed by only a handful of women Members of Congress over the history of Congress because each of our fathers served in the House before us. NANCY's father, Representative Thomas D'Alesandro, served in the House from Maryland from 1939 to 1947. My father, Representative Edward Roybal, served an area of Los Angeles near my current district from 1963 to 1993. I know that the model of public service provided by our fathers was essential to each of us as we decided upon the course of our careers.

I congratulate NANCY PELOSI as she officially assumes her leadership duties today. She takes her place today among a long line of outstanding Democratic whips that go before her in the House's history, including Representative DAVID BONIOR, whom she succeeds. I pledge to work with her and our other Democratic leaders, indeed all the leaders of the House, in going forward with our work in a manner that best reflects the American people and that always strives to make the House of Representatives truly "the people's House."

CONGRATULATING THE HONORABLE NANCY PELOSI ON HER
ELECTION TO MINORITY WHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues, and the fact that so many remain here this evening to laud our newly elected whip, NANCY PELOSI, is testimony to the fact that she will be a strong and forceful voice for our party. She is good news for my special passion in Congress, for she understands better than anybody I have met here that the Federal Government can be a better partner to make our communities more livable, to make our families safe, healthy and more economically secure.

But the best news, Mr. Speaker, is for the American people and for this

Chamber. It seems that at times we have forgotten how to work together to solve problems here in this House. But the gentlewoman from California's special skills not only as the only Westerner in leadership, not only as the first and only woman in either party to reach this exalted level but as somebody who embodies what it means to be a legislator, her insight, intelligence, grace and tenacity will help us do our job better for the American public.

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We all welcome this gift from California and the Pelosi family, and I hope we are equal to the challenge.

I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I feel privileged and honored to join my colleagues on the House floor to mark an historic day for this body, for Democrats, for women and for America. Tomorrow, the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) will be sworn in as the Democratic whip. This occasion is cause for celebration and is a sign of great progress.

The gentlewoman from California's election to whip is an historic landmark in the evolution of our great democracy. She will now emerge more fully as a leading voice on the national stage for the Democratic Party and for the Congress, and she will motivate women of all ages, because of her eloquence, her competence, her confidence and her passion, to strive for new heights and to participate more fully and completely in politics and policy.

We are witnessing a shift in the national political landscape. It is a movement. Women do not want to just be at the table, we want to be at the head of the table. Because of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), we are energized and empowered. Our new Democratic whip was not elected because she was a woman. That she is one is a real benefit, and she will send a strong message as an inspiration for aspiring women throughout the country.

Her election is a demonstration of the reality that the Democratic Party is a party of diversity, inclusion and opportunity. She has made great efforts to reach out to members from all parts of the Democratic Party and is committed to the needs and values of this caucus and our diverse constituencies.

But to me she is not just the whip; she is an inspiration, a mentor, a dear friend and a true leader in every sense of the word. I look forward to following her to advance an agenda we can all be proud of. I join my colleagues in congratulating her and wishing her well.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, when I think of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), these words come to mind: N, never

fearing to move; A, aggressively; N and C, sensitive to needed causes; Y, yielding a great foresight; P, progressive; E, energizing; L, loving; O, overwhelmingly; S, spelling; and I, intellect. That is our "NANCY PELOSI."

I am so happy to be from the State of California that produced this woman that will guide this country in the future. I salute the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), our newest whip.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, while she's already been on the job for about three weeks now, tomorrow my colleagues, my fellow Californian, my friend, NANCY PELOSI will be sworn in to her new post as the democratic whip, and it's going to be a big day for America.

NANCY is the highest-ranking woman in the United States Congress . . . ever! As a Hispanic member of Congress, I can not be prouder of this moment. When the barriers of achievement and opportunity fall for one, they fall for all of us.

NANCY has her work cut out for her. She has dedicated herself to tackling the tough issues facing our economy. There are going to be some rough battles, but NANCY's unique blend of grace and determination will serve her well in the Whip post.

It's hard not to admire NANCY PELOSI. She is a gracious, engaging woman who has raised five children, Chaired the California Democratic Party, served eight terms in Congress, doggedly advocated increased funding for healthcare and breast cancer research, and fought for human rights at home and abroad.

It was her courageous fight against PNTR and for human fights in China, that first introduced me to NANCY when I came to Congress two years ago. I fought along side NANCY as she championed U.S. global leadership for human rights and sustainable development.

NANCY is a loyal friend. I'll never forget how NANCY stepped forward on my behalf during my bid for a position on the rules committee. NANCY PELOSI is always willing to go to bat for her friends. This is the NANCY I know! NANCY has been going to bat for the people of California for 16 years and now she is going to bat for the Democratic Party and the entire nation.

I look forward to NANCY's truly groundbreaking leadership as she leads our party and our nation into the twenty-first century.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a Member of the House, whom I consider not only a gifted leader but a dear friend. History is being made as NANCY PELOSI is officially sworn in as the new Democratic Whip.

But history will ultimately cite not only the election of the highest-ranking women in the U.S. House of Representatives, it will sit in judgment of the effectiveness of her tenure as Whip. The work has only just begun. And I have every confidence that history will judge this election not only as a landmark event in American history, but a turning point for the Democratic Party and democratic principles. The reason for my optimism is pretty simple. NANCY is a born leader. A lot can be said of her skills, her knack for organizing, her perseverance, and her personal commitment to excellence. But of all the positive things that can be said on her skills and talent, one word al-

ways comes to mind when you think of NANCY PELOSI: leadership. NANCY is a leader when she speaks out for the underprivileged and the disenfranchised. NANCY is a leader in the way she brings people and causes together in a collective and collaborative process. NANCY's leadership drives her to focus on goals and results.

Integrity, honesty, and hard work are the pillars of her success. And I know that she will work tirelessly to forward democratic causes. And working with the Democratic Leader—DICK GEPHARDT—have every confidence that the Democratic Caucus and Party are on the cusp of a new and exciting era.

So to NANCY PELOSI I say you have my every confidence and my total support. Now—let's get to work. Congratulations!

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, we are all here today to honor our colleague and friend NANCY PELOSI. As a fellow Californian and a friend, it is hard for me to hide my delight at NANCY's election as Democratic Whip. For nearly fifteen years, NANCY has done a wonderful job representing the city of San Francisco in Congress. From education, health care, housing, and the economy, she has worked to improve the quality of life for Californians—and all Americans.

On October 10, 2001, the Democratic Caucus made history. We made history by electing NANCY to the highest position ever held by a woman in Congress. Electing a woman to a leadership position was long overdue. And while the Democratic Party continues to be the party of progress, our work is not yet complete.

NANCY, with your election as House Democratic Whip, we made history, we've made progress, and now we will work together to improve American government and to better the lives of the American people. Thank you NANCY for your leadership and your friendship. Congratulations!

RESPONDING TO HUGE TAX BREAKS GIVEN TO AMERICA'S RICH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BROWN of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) and wish her the very best, but the issue that I want to focus on is a very important piece of legislation which is going to surface tomorrow, and that is the issue of how Congress responds to the huge tax breaks that the President and the Republican leadership have given to the wealthiest 1 percent of the population.

Mr. Speaker, this country has a \$6 trillion national debt, and, for the first time now in several years, we are running a deficit.

Mr. Speaker, despite all of the great speeches here about lockboxes and our great love for Social Security, everybody understands that Congress is now dipping into and raiding the Social Security fund.

Further, Mr. Speaker, most people in this country understand that we have

many enormous social needs. In my State of Vermont, every week when I go out and speak to senior citizens, they demand of me that Congress do something about the outrageously high cost of prescription drugs and the fact that we do not have a strong prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, what the issue tomorrow is going to be about is do we give huge tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country? Forty percent of the President's tax breaks go to the wealthiest 1 percent, people who have a minimum income of \$370,000 a year and average over \$1 million a year in income. So the choice that Congress faces is, do you give huge tax breaks in the future to those people, or do you provide a strong prescription drug benefit under Medicare?

Mr. Speaker, not only is the President and the Republican leadership not going to provide a strong prescription drug benefit under Medicare, in fact in many ways they are going to cut back on Medicare. At a time when we need to strengthen Social Security, at a time that we need to raise the COLA, the President and the Republican leadership are dipping into the Social Security Trust Fund.

Mr. Speaker, let us get our priorities right. I speak to veterans virtually every week in the State of Vermont. We have many town meetings. What they tell me is when they apply for a benefit it takes 6, 7, 8, 10 months for them to get that benefit processed, and the reason is that in many instances the Veterans Administration is understaffed and is unable to process those claims.

Is it more important to give tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires, or is it more important to make sure that our veterans get the benefits to which they are entitled?

Mr. Speaker, just this last week, a couple of days ago, there was a front page story in the New York Times which talked about how middle class parents are finding it harder and harder to pay for the college costs of their kids. The average American young person graduating from a 4-year college ends up \$20,000 in debt excluding the debt incurred, and the growing debt incurred, by their parents.

Is it more important to protect the middle class and make sure that the young people of this country can go to the college that they want and do that by significantly expanding Pell grants and other financial aid programs, or is it more important to give tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires, to people who provide huge campaign contributions to Members of this Congress and the White House?

Mr. Speaker, all over this country we are facing a disaster in terms of child care. Working families are unable to find affordable quality child care. We have people who are paying too much and getting too little, and the children are suffering. Yet the Federal commitment to child care is minimal.