



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2003

No. 161

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 7, 2003.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVEN C. LATOURETTE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

We bless You and praise You, Lord God, for the colorful season of autumn. As the days grow shorter and the light dims, we face the inevitable winter. Among the falling leaves You seed the Earth with hidden life. Amidst the dying You are already planting a future. Washed deep by rain and snow, You nurture the promise. Help us to live through our abandonment to Your loving providence, that the sacrificial plans and the decisive ideas of this Congress may flourish with new life for America. 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 Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DUNCAN 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minute per side.

THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as we prepare this morning to deal with one of

the most important pieces of legislation, the Department of Defense authorization bill conference report, which my friends, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), will be managing, I would like to take this 1-minute to talk about a different issue, and that is the report that we got this morning of the improvement in our Nation's unemployment rate.

We are so gratified that the policies that President Bush has put forward are working. We obviously have a long way to go, but based on the numbers as they used to exist, a 6 percent unemployment rate, which is where we are today, used to be considered full employment. Now, we obviously in the last several years have seen it drop to the 4 percent level, and we want it to get there.

But, Mr. Speaker, with the report of a 126,000 increase, nearly triple what had been estimated in the payroll numbers, we are on the track; and our policies of reducing the tax burden on working Americans to encourage economic growth and, yes, Mr. Speaker, our goal of free trade, opening up new markets for U.S. goods and services around the world and ensuring we have the opportunity for imports to come here, are beginning to pay off. Let us make sure that we stay on that track.

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