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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

In Your mercy, Lord, look upon the House of Representatives and hear our prayer. As many Christians enter a spring penitential season of prayer and fasting, all are reminded that we seemingly come from nothingness and soon return to the dust of the Earth. Life is short. Each of us has limited time before You to prove oneself a contributor of goodness or a drain on society. By Your Spirit, move us to repentance for our sins and to learn from our mistakes of the past.

As people of faith, may we live what we believe and hold ourselves accountable to all those we love and serve by our deeds. May each day, all life long, deepen our conversion of heart; for in Your light we see light now and forever. 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.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. NADLER 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 bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 111. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the national significance of the Miami Circle site in the State of Florida as well as the suitability and feasibility of its inclusion in the National Park System as part of Biscayne National Park, and for other purposes.

S. 117. An act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to sell or exchange certain land in the State of Florida, and for other purposes.

S. 144. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to provide assistance through States to eligible weed management entities to control or eradicate harmful, nonnative weeds on public and private land.

S. 210. An act to provide for the protection of archaeological sites in the Galisteo Basin in New Mexico, and for other purposes.

S. 214. An act to designate Fort Bayard Historic District in the State of New Mexico as a National Historic Landmark, and for other purposes.

S. 233. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of Coltsville in the State of Connecticut for potential inclusion in the National Park System.

S. 254. An act to revise the boundary of the Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park in the State of Hawaii, and for other purposes.

COMMEMORATING 1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE MASSACRES IN GUJARAT, INDIA

(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 commemorate the 1-year anniversary of the massacres in Gujarat, India, by Hindu extremists and extend my sympathies to those families who have suffered so terribly at the hands of the extremists.

Extremism is on the rise in a number of countries including India where leading figures and officials have directly or indirectly supported attacks against and massacres of moderate Muslims, Dalits, also called "untouchables," Christians, and other minorities. The perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice.

I have a number of excellent reports here and in my office from human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch, ASSIST, Amnesty International, local Indian NGOs detailing the attacks in Gujarat; and I urge Members to read these reports, respond to the issues facing the people of India today. We must support those who would further democracy and the rule of law and freedom in India, not stifle and suppress it; and these violent extremists must be brought to justice.

OPPOSITION TO SECTION 418 IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition today to the provision of section 418 within H.R. 743, which would have closed a so-called "loophole" relating to the government pension offset. Since this provision was

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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not removed from the measure, I am forced to oppose this entirely.

The government pension offset unfairly reduces the retirement benefits of public employees, our teachers who have dedicated their lives to serving their communities and our children. Many of those impacted expect to receive the Social Security benefits their spouses earned and often remain unaware of the offsets until they reach retirement age. Educators are shocked to learn that their decision to enter the education profession, often at a considerable financial sacrifice, has caused them to also lose the benefits that they had counted on. The resulting loss of income forces some into poverty and desperation.

I ask that we vote "no" on H.R. 743.

FAMILY CARE TAX CREDIT ACT

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

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, providing help to our working families is one of the main reasons I am in Washington today. I am proud of what we have accomplished, partial elimination of the marriage tax penalty, as well as expansion of the child tax credit; but I believe we should go a step further.

Currently, we give tax credit to families who pay for day care and other services, but families who have a parent taking care of their children are left on their own. That is why I have introduced the Family Care Tax Credit Act to give a fair and balanced approach to the child care tax credits by giving help to all middle-class families of children. Many parents in Kansas tell me that they would like to stay home with their children or to care for a loved one, but they cannot overcome the financial barriers caused by this tax bill. My plan would simply remove one of those barriers.

President Bush's economic stimulus package is a good start, but I think we could and should do more.

EXPANDED AND IMPROVED MEDICARE FOR ALL ACT

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, today the New York Times reported that 75 million people went without health insurance in 2001 or 2002. Our failing economy and rising health care costs are failing working families who make up the majority of uninsured Americans. While costs continue to go up, we are not getting what we are paying for. Government expenditures have accounted for 60 percent of total U.S. health care costs. Our government spends more money per person than countries that provide universal health care. Our citizens are so close to pay-

ing for a universal health care system, but so far from getting it.

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and I have introduced a bill to ensure that all Americans have access to a universal high standard of medical care. This bill, Medicare for All, would help patients get the health care they need. It would help physicians, nurses, and other health professionals to get back to practicing medicine instead of filling out paperwork. I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 676, a bill to finally bring universal guaranteed quality health care to all Americans.

A TRIBUTE TO AN AMAZING MAN FROM LAKELAND, FLORIDA

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

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary man, a man who lived to see his wish come true. Lakeland's John McMorran, who passed away as the oldest-living American at the ripe old age of 113, got his wish to live in 3 centuries.

John McMorran, the fourth-oldest living person in the world, was born in a log cabin in Port Huron, Michigan, on June 19, 1889, the same year the Eiffel Tower was built. In 1990 he moved to Lakeland in my district to be near his family. The son of farmers, he held a variety of jobs until he retired at 84. He worked at a Detroit munitions factory earning a dollar a day during World War I. Kind, happy, hard working, well put together were just some of the words used to describe him. He is survived by a vast network of family and friends who loved him.

Madam Speaker, I believe John McMorran said it best himself. When asked what his secret was to long life, he responded by saying: "I drink a cup of coffee before every meal and I stay away from cheap whiskey."

God bless John and his family, Madam Speaker.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss a silent, yet deadly, epidemic facing the country: domestic violence. Every 9 seconds a woman is battered in the United States. In 2001, 80,000 women and children in New York State alone requested help from domestic violence programs, and these were only the documented cases. Many more cases go unmentioned as women, fearing to come forward, leave the assaults unreported.

The most common form of domestic abuse is physical; but many men abuse their wives and partners emotionally, sexually, and economically; and women are not the only victims. Between 3.3

and 10 million children annually witness the abuse that occurs between their parents, and so the domestic violence cycle is passed on from generation to generation.

For many years domestic violence has been viewed as a woman's problem, but that is not the case. Domestic violence is a woman's problem, a man's problem, the community's problem. The time is long overdue for men to take a stand and say that domestic violence is unacceptable. We must have full funding for the Violence Against Women Act to protect women who are victims. The President has said so, but his 2004 budget proposes a \$19 million cut in funding for domestic violence. We demand full funding for the Violence Against Women Act. We commend the groups who work so tirelessly to extend this message.

HONORING C.M. WILLIAMS

(Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today honoring an exceptional public servant from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Mr. C.M. Williams. Mr. Williams has served in local government for 40 years and as Stafford County administrator, a county with a population of more than 100,000, since 1984.

Mr. Williams has used his position well for the benefit of the Virginians that he serves. For example, he played a key role in preserving Virginia's historic treasures as executive officer of the George Washington Boyhood Home Foundation. Additionally, Mr. Williams was instrumental in obtaining funding for the Stafford Regional Airport, as well as in establishing the James Monroe Center for Graduate and Professional Studies at Mary Washington College.

Mr. Williams has long been a notable public servant and citizen, even serving as president of the Virginia Association of County Administrators. I commend him for his dedication to Virginia and wish him well in all that he pursues as he steps down to enjoy retirement.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about the importance of fully funding the Violence Against Women Act of 2000, otherwise known as VAWA.

Domestic violence is a crisis that plagues far too many families in our communities. In New York State alone, the State division of criminal justice service has received 55,558 police reports of family domestic violence offenses in 1999. This alarming number