

amendments comply with the rules of the House.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER
AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1119

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1119.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to inquire about the schedule for next week.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the gentleman that the House will convene on Tuesday at 12:30 for morning hour and at 2 p.m. for legislative business. We will consider several measures under suspension of the rules. A final list of those bills will be sent to the Members' offices by the end of this week. Any votes called on those measures will be rolled until 6:30 p.m.

On Wednesday we may consider additional bills under suspension of the rules, as well as H.R. 766, the Nanotechnology Research and Development Act. On Thursday and the balance of the week, we plan to consider H.R. 1261, the Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act and the President's economic growth and jobs package that the Committee on Ways and Means will mark up early next week.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for the information, but I would like to have additional information, and I will continue to yield for that information.

Our side would be interested in knowing will the tax bill come up next week? The gentleman is calling the economic growth proposal the tax bill, right?

Mr. BLUNT. The President's economic growth bill, which will do things that stimulate the economy and create jobs by reducing people's tax burden, will come up next Friday. My understanding is that the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means have reached an understanding and will be marking that bill up on Tuesday, file the report on Thursday, and we will have floor action on that bill on Friday.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, could the gentleman tell us whether the minority side will be allowed to offer a substitute on the floor?

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend's request. I think I should leave that up to the Committee

on Rules, but tradition would certainly indicate that that would be normally the case.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. If we deal with the tax bill on Friday, does the gentleman think our work will be completed 2 p.m. on Friday?

Mr. BLUNT. We would hope to be done by 2 p.m. I hope as the week progresses we may get agreement to start Friday an hour earlier, at 9, but that will be something we will work out with our friends on the other side during the week. And if that is the case, I do not see any reason to believe that we would not be done by 2 o'clock or so on Friday.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. On the Workforce Investment Act, will you allow a substitute on this bill on the floor?

Mr. BLUNT. Again, I think that will be left up to the Committee on Rules. I think an announcement was just made about that Act by a member of Committee on Rules, and that will be a decision that they will make pursuant to the announcement that was just made.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. I will continue to yield to the gentleman for additional information for the body. I notice the comp time bill is not on the schedule for next week in your announcement, but we keep hearing that this bill is coming. Can you tell us when the bill might come to the floor.

Mr. BLUNT. My friend, it is one of those many things that are out there now. Our committees are doing their work. There are several bills that are ready through the committee process. We are trying to find time on the floor for several bills and that is one of them.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Whip.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MAY
5, 2003

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY,
MAY 6, 2003

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, May 5, 2003, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 6, for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in

order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

□ 1545

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

(Mr. PALLONE. addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana. addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
2003

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today is the National Day of Prayer. On the first Thursday of each May, people across our Nation gather together to pray to the God who is the very foundation of this great country. Without any court challenge or liberal protestors to avoid, praying Americans meet on courthouse steps, town squares, and in local parks to praise God for his blessing and ask God to continue to bless America.

This year I can assure my colleagues that millions of prayers will be offered in appreciation for our men and women in uniform who have paid the highest price for our freedom. Yet even as we stand today in prayer for our heroes, there are those who stand against the freedom that we enjoy.

Even though the Founding Fathers spoke of "Nature's God" and of the "Creator" in the Declaration of Independence, the Federal courts are increasingly trying to drive every vestige of faith from public life. Yesterday, April 30, was the most recent example, coming from the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. And I will read from the Boston Globe, which said, "Judges bar prayer at public colleges. In a precedent-setting ruling against prayer at a State college, a Federal appeals court has barred the Virginia Military Institute from writing and reciting a prayer before cadets eat their evening meals."

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Citadel, down in South Carolina, is reviewing its policy since that Federal court ruling. And also, Mr. Speaker, I hate to even mention this, but the academy in Annapolis is also reviewing its policy. The American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland is calling on the academy to review its practices of leading the students in prayer.

Mr. Speaker, let me also share with my colleagues that it was just a few months ago that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled to have "under God" taken from our Pledge of Allegiance.

How much longer will we stand by and allow others to ignore the very God upon whom our Nation was founded? Our Constitution demands the freedom to worship freely; and our future leaders, our men and women in the military academies across the country, are now being denied the very freedom that many have died to ensure for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just sad; it is completely detestable. And on this National Day of Prayer, let us honor our heroes, those who have returned home and those who sacrificed their lives, by standing against those liberals who would seek to challenge their God-given right to pray for a living Lord.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I believe this quote says it best, and it comes from the days of Jefferson and Adams. And the quote is this, Mr. Speaker: "Religion can survive in the absence of freedom. But freedom without religion is dangerous and unstable."

Mr. Speaker, I have three military bases in my district, Camp Lejeune, Cherry Point, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. I want to close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform and their families, and the families of those who have lost loved ones defending freedom in this country. I close by asking three times, "God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America."

COMING HOME: WELCOMING OUR TROOPS WITH CUTS IN VETERANS PROGRAMS

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my concern for the men and women of our armed services who will be returning and are returning from Iraq. My colleagues are aware that our troops were funded during the period of fighting last month at the rate of about \$1 billion, \$1 billion, every 2 or 3 days.

Now, we did not want our troops to go without having everything that they needed for success, but if we have the money to send our troops to war, we must, Mr. Speaker, have the money for them when they return. To abandon them upon their return shows disrespect for those who have willingly

risked all when their Nation called them to serve.

In the next few months, Congress will be voting on the veterans budget. The House Republican budget that came through this House was outrageous. It cut veterans benefits by \$25 billion over the next 10 years, and they took that vote right after a resolution expressing support for our troops. Now, the final budget resolution we passed corrected some of the most glaring problems in that budget, but it is still \$1 billion less for the health care for our veterans in the coming year. One billion dollars. That would fund approximately 5,000 doctors, 10,000 nurses, or three million additional outpatient visits.

Over the next 10 years, the budget falls far short of what will be needed to keep up with inflation and with the growing number of veterans who were using the veterans health care system. We must fight during the appropriation process for a budget that is worthy of our returning veterans. We cannot ignore their rights and their needs. Veterans health care is one of the most important issues that we fund.

We hope and pray that we do not have veterans from the current conflict who become ill with Gulf War illness, but we must prepare for that possibility. And we must not forget the warriors of the first Gulf War who are sick, tens of thousands of them, and are still waiting to learn the cause and the cure for their illnesses.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we need to change the whole process of funding our veterans health care. Right now, each year in Congress, as we are doing this year, we have to fight for a health care budget. In the last session, there was legislation to change VA health care funding so that the amount of funding would automatically, automatically rise each year to accommodate inflation and new enrollees, that is, for example, to accommodate the returning veterans from Iraq. I will again, and I urge all my colleagues, to cosponsor this bill when it is reintroduced this session. And we must work hard for its passage.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, 200,000 veterans are waiting more than 6 months for their first health care appointment. In fact, veterans will die while waiting for that first appointment. We must resolve to change this immoral situation.

When our active-duty soldiers from the war in Iraq leave service, many are qualified for educational benefits under the Montgomery GI bill. This is an earned benefit that allows them to re-enter civilian life as educated and productive members. But the current GI bill benefits are woefully inadequate to do the job. Back in 1944, this bill paid for the full cost of college tuition. But now it barely pays for two-thirds of the average cost of attending a 4-year public college. We must work to provide funding for the full cost of tuition fees, books, and supplies for those who do serve 4 years of active duty in the military service.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, because there are so many other areas that need more funding than is currently budgeted. We will soon be commemorating Memorial Day. We will be hearing words of support for our veterans from all Members of Congress as they speak to Memorial Day crowds. But words can be cheap. What is important is how we vote.

We have the money. We have the resources. It is a question of priorities. It is a question of will. Let us make our veterans, who are returning from war, proud of us.

There is one final thing I want to say. A substantive way we can assist our veterans is to guarantee them jobs with companies that are awarded government contracts to rebuild Iraq, and I have introduced a bill to do just that. It is called the Let U.S. Veterans Rebuild Iraq Act, which will treat our veterans with the respect they deserve and provide a tangible way to better their lives. They fought for freedom in Iraq, who better to get involved in securing the future for Iraq?

H.R. 361, THE SPORTS AGENT RESPONSIBILITY AND TRUST ACT (SPARTA)

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

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, last weekend, the National Football League draft was conducted. Over 200 players were selected in the draft. Each player eventually will be represented by an agent. The difficult thing is that many of these people who call themselves agents have no special qualifications.

We find that many of them have no legal training, no expertise in writing contracts, some misrepresent themselves, some offer illegal inducements, particularly to undergraduates, such as cars, cash, clothes, and sometimes even drugs, to get young people to commit to a contract while they still have eligibility, which makes them ineligible, of course. A few even have criminal records. Most of them will tell a player that they will get them drafted higher.

The NFL committee will say, well, you are going to be a fourth-round pick; and these agents say, well, if you come with me, I will get you a trainer and a nutritionist, and we will make you a first-round pick, which obviously does not happen. And then some even get the power of attorney, which sometimes bankrupts these individuals.

The National Football League Players Association currently says that roughly one-half of the players leaving the National Football League have no money. The minimum salary is several hundred thousand dollars. Some guys make millions of dollars; some sign for \$10 million or \$11 million. Yet at the end of their career, nearly one-half have no money left. A lot of that is due simply to the issue of the way they are treated by their agents.