

the States, and then it should begin to deal with the very real needs of the Forest Service, to deal with its maintenance backlog. Some of these roads need dramatic amounts of work in the short term. I have some in my district that have been promised for several years that roads, washed out in flood 5 years ago would be rebuilt; and yet the money, as I say, each summer has been taken away and spent on fighting forest fires because there is not enough money in the budget to fight forest fires because, of course, the administration has no money because they have given it away in tax cuts to all the rich people. So this is a pretty strange way to run a country and make a policy on Federal lands that are so precious to the heritage and to the environmental future of our Nation.

ROADLESS AREA CONSERVATION ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, as I fly across America, which I do every Monday and Friday from Seattle to Dulles Airport, every time I fly I realize what a beautiful country we have, truly the most beautiful one both for our democracy and in our beautiful lands. And those lands now are still at risk because the current administration, as the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) so well laid out, threatens to violate the roadless area rule and violate the very clear desires of Americans to protect the last remaining pristine areas in our national forests.

Now, we have an opportunity to stop this administration from gutting the roadless area rule. And I hope that my colleagues will join the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT) and myself in co-sponsoring the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2003.

This bill will simply incorporate the existing rule that protects the last remaining one-third of our national forests that truly are the crown jewels of our national forest system. And it will protect by preventing future road building, road building that has already covered 360,000 miles of roads in our national forests already, most of which are built for timber harvest, much of which is no longer usable. At least 60,000 of those miles of road are no longer usable by anyone, even though they were used and built with taxpayer money. That is enough road to go around the world 16 times already in our national forests.

Now, in response to that, Americans came out in droves over the last 3 years at over 600 public meetings held by the Federal Government to ask Americans what they wanted to do with their national forests. At those over-600 meetings of 2 million Americans, both in person and by e-mail let-

ter, responded with the very clear and dramatic message, preserve these last remaining virgin pristine areas. Over 96 percent of Americans who addressed this issue had a single message for the President of the United States: keep the clear-cutting and the bulldozers out of these remaining forests. And we got some good news rhetorically from the administration because rhetorically the administration said that they are going to keep the roadless area rule. But, it is one of those big "buts" that you hear so much of in life; they were going to slash and burn by exempting Alaska. And they were going to slash and burn by exempting other States, as long as in some process, it remains uncertain, the Governor of that State wanted to exempt that particular State.

In fact, some of the biggest tracts, in fact, the biggest tracts, the most biologically intact tracts of land in the world for temperate forests are in the Tongass and Chugach National Forests which are right now protected by the roadless area rule, which if the President has his way will no longer be protected. These are the most biologically productive rain forests in the world that the administration wants to now open up to clear-cutting and road building, to strip away the protection that over 2 million Americans spoke so loudly to keep, and that is just wrong. It is wrong because Americans do not want it, and it is wrong because it violates the whole spirit of the roadless area rule.

You cannot say you are going to uphold the roadless area rule and then strip out the largest forests in the United States from its protection. It is kind of like the President saying, We will have the No Child Left Behind Act, but we will exempt the children in Alaska because they are some kind of lesser Americans, and then we will also exempt the States where Governors say we do not want to have this protection of No Child Left Behind.

We believe that all American forests, including Alaska, including all 50 States, are entitled to the roadless area rule.

Now, in my State of Washington, we are kind of proud of our forests too. We have three very beautiful roadless area rules that we want to see statutorily protected, protected by a law passed by Congress so that no President of either party in the future can cave in to special interests to allow clear-cutting in these forests. These are in the Colville National Forest, they are in the Dark Divide area in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and my personal favorite, the Olympic National Forest close to where I live in Kitsap County, Washington.

In that forest there are two trees at the end of a trail in this roadless area, two beautiful Douglas firs. They are about maybe 8 feet in diameter. Incredible trees. We call them Theodore and Franklin after the Roosevelts who were so responsible for protecting these

areas that are now subject to the roadless area rule.

Our message from Washington State is, Theodore and Franklin deserve protection, and their cousins in Alaska deserve protection, and every tree in these protected roadless areas deserve protection. I hope my colleagues will join me in co-sponsoring this bill and send a message to the administration, we want the roadless area, not just pieces.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 10 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon today.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at noon.

PRAYER

Dr. David Halpern, Rabbi, Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Brooklyn, New York, offered the following prayer:

Our Father, Sovereign of the world, we stand in the House of freely elected representatives of all the American people. These men and women, dedicated and strong, have accepted the awesome burden of promulgating the laws by which our free society lives and shall live. They wear this mantle of leadership in profoundly perilous times.

The threat to human security wears many faces: Tyranny, terror, religious oppression, racial tension, disease, hunger and despair. We seek the solution to these problems. We search diligently for the road to peace, for the path to harmonious living, for the means to achieve human dignity for us all created in Thine image.

May we always remember that to safeguard our own freedom, we must speak out against oppression, and, where warranted, even take up arms against it. To enjoy the blessings of our own wealth, we must also provide for the underprivileged and the needy. To be truly strong requires more than strength of arms, it requires strength of spirit.

Almost six decades have passed since the age of the Nazi death camps, the places where 6 million Jewish men, women and children had their lives cruelly and brutally ended, their only sin that they were born Jewish. The world has watched helplessly as in the last decade hundreds of thousands of different nationalities and ethnic groups have been slaughtered. We pray that the destruction of man by his fellow because of religious beliefs or racial origins will be known no more;

that people of different religious paths may learn to live side-by-side in peace and in harmony.

We ask Thy blessing upon these members of our Congress, the spiritual heirs of those who were so instrumental in bestowing upon the seed of Israel the restoration of their homeland. We pray that our President will succeed in his determined mission of building peace with security and of shining the bright light of freedom upon that benighted part of the world.

Grant that our President and Vice President and all our elected leaders will be blessed with clear vision to see and understand the future, and the courage and heart to make it a blessed and beautiful reality.

We pray in the words of Isaiah: May the spirit of the Lord rest upon us, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

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

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

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

Mr. KLINE. Madam 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 pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LANTOS 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.

WELCOMING DR. DAVID HALPERN, RABBI, FLATBUSH PARK JEWISH CENTER, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

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

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to welcome to the Chamber

Rabbi David Halpern, who offered our opening prayer. I thank him for his thoughtful invocation.

Madam Speaker, Rabbi Halpern's accomplishments in his community of Flatbush, Brooklyn, have touched many lives across the Nation, and his work merits national recognition.

He leads the Flatbush Park Jewish Center. He is the Principal of the religious school there, which he helped found in 1952. He sought to create a place where religiously observant and religiously curious alike can feel comfortable; to advance the goal of Jewish learning; and to support Jewish causes around our country and around the globe. He also served as a Chaplain in the 71st Infantry of the 42nd Division of the National Guard for 10 years, and he sits on the New York board of Rabbis.

Madam Speaker, the esteem in which the Flatbush Park Jewish Center is held indicates that Rabbi Halpern's efforts have been an unqualified success. In recognition of his sense of compassion and leadership, he was chosen to speak on behalf of the community of Flatbush in the wake of the 9/11 tragedy.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted that he was able to share some of his wisdom and grace with us today. We admire his commitment to his faith and to his community.

MODERNIZING MEDICARE

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

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the House in support of the Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act, which will be marked up in the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Energy and Commerce this morning.

Modernizing Medicare with a prescription drug benefit puts a down payment on a healthy future for Americans. The House has an historic opportunity to bring up to date our health care system for millions of seniors.

The bill that will soon be before this House reflects the compassionate conservatism of my party. It is compassionate because it is providing much needed prescription drug coverage to Americans on a fixed income. It is conservative because prescription drugs often provide the ounce of prevention that beats the pound of cure. It is conservative because this legislation will serve the people today without breaking the bank tomorrow. It makes no financial sense to cover astronomically expensive surgery and not cover drugs that could have prevented that surgery.

We have promised a benefit to our seniors for years. This year, this year, Madam Speaker, it is time to deliver.

WELCOMING DR. DAVID HALPERN, RABBI, FLATBUSH PARK JEWISH CENTER, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

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

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker, it is not usual that a relatively young man like myself can say that I have known someone well for nearly 20 years, but it is in that spirit that I welcome Rabbi David Halpern here this morning and thank him for his thoughtful words.

Brooklyn is full of distinguished spiritual leaders, and Rabbi Halpern stands out as a giant among them. Rabbi Halpern is a past President of the Rabbinical Board of Flatbush, where he served as Chairman of the Board's Membership Committee for 13 years. He is also a prominent member of other Rabbinical organizations and the Rabbinical Council of the United States.

He is widely respected and recognized for his intellect and wisdom, but, if there is one thing that distinguishes Rabbi Halpern, it is dedication not only to his faith, but in particular to his congregants and his community. More than 50 years ago, Rabbi Halpern became the first Rabbi of the Flatbush Park Jewish Center. And more than 50 years later, Rabbi Halpern is still there, and the community is stronger than ever.

Under his leadership, Flatbush Park has grown from a gathering of only 65 families in a rented store into a Modern Orthodox congregation of more than 500 family members. Today, there are thousands of people in Brooklyn and beyond whose spiritual lives were shaped by Rabbi Halpern.

As hard as I try to express what Rabbi Halpern means to this community, the ultimate testament is how many people joined him on his journey to Washington today. Dozens from his community, as well as distinguished Rabbis, are here in his honor, and it is my particular pleasure to welcome Rabbi Halpern's wife Sheila, his son Neil, his daughters Risa and Beth, his son-in-law Dennis and his granddaughter Lauren who are in Washington on this most important occasion.

In closing, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives and our grateful community, I would like to thank Rabbi Halpern for his eloquent words this morning and for his service to our whole country.

HONORING JACKSON TOBISKA, 2003 PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mr. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Jackson Tobiska, a senior at Orange County's High School of the Arts, for being selected as a 2003 Presidential Scholar.