



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 2003

No. 100

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:
Lord God, our defense in every battle and our source of peace, be with the Members of the House of Representatives this day and guide the security of this Nation.

The conquest of Jericho and the sin of Achan taught Joshua and the people of his day that You, Lord, would be with them in every engagement with an enemy as long as they followed all Your commands and held back nothing for themselves in their service to do Your holy will. Disobedience and self-reliance lead only to defeat.

Help us in our day to lead the war against terrorism; but let us never be deceived ourselves. Attuned to Your Word and the Spirit in the story of Joshua, may we, as individual citizens or in any corporate way, never excuse ourselves from honesty and integrity by acting out of stealth or deception, even for a moment.

By Your power and grace may we always choose to do what is right, seeking consultation and sensing our communion with You, 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. PITTS. 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. PITTS. 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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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 Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. EHLERS 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.

SUPPORT THE TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak about a bill we will be discussing today, H.R. 438, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003. This bill recognizes a major problem we are having in our K-12 educational system, that is, the shortage of qualified teachers in special education, math, and science.

This bill addresses that by offering incentives to teachers to enter these fields and also to remain in these fields, primarily incentives through loan forgiveness of their student loans which they take out in order to obtain the proper training.

To show my colleagues how serious this situation is, note that in: science, in American junior and high schools, 57 percent of the teachers do not have either a major or a minor in the subject that they are teaching. In high school physics, it is even worse: a significant

percentage of teachers have not even taken one course in college physics.

Those teachers who are highly qualified in science are tempted to leave teaching because they can double their salary in industry, and so this bill is a good effort to maintain our teaching staff and retain them in the positions where we desperately need them. I urge its passage.

FALSE AND MISLEADING STATEMENTS ABOUT IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, much media attention has been directed toward the President's State of the Union Address on January 28, 2003, wherein he alleged an Iraqi nuclear threat which the Vice President's office knew was false almost a year earlier. More attention needs to be paid to false and misleading statements which preceded the vote on the Iraqi resolution in this House.

Two days before the vote on October 8, 2002, speaking in Cincinnati, the President spoke of his determination to attack Iraq: "Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun, that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."

This chilling apocalyptic statement was not based on clear evidence of peril but was, in fact, based on falsehoods hidden from public view by the office of the Vice President. Did the Vice President's office knowingly conceal information its own representative obtained that Iraq was, in fact, not attempting to purchase nuclear materials from Niger? Was the White House in possession of the same information prior to the President giving his shocking declaration in Cincinnati?

There is no question that the President's statements, which we now know

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H6351

were false and misleading, influenced the debate in this House and the decision to go to war. It is imperative we have open public hearings to wash this stain from our national reputation.

URGING PRESIDENT TO PROVIDE FLOOD ASSISTANCE

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last night the Wabash River crested at 25 feet in northeastern Indiana, but thanks to the extraordinary leadership of Mayor Ted Ellis and Sheriff Barry Story, Bluffton, Indiana, was spared a catastrophe. Their leadership and cooperation with Governor Frank O'Bannon and literally thousands of volunteers in Wells and Adams counties managed to stem the tide.

Special commendation to Irving Material, Incorporated, and also to the 2nd of the 152nd Mech out of Muncie, Indiana, under the leadership of General Bushkirk and Colonel Shato who led the troops, nearly 200 in number, in loading sandbags and stacking sandbags and saving the community of Bluffton, Indiana.

As more rain approaches, I urge the President to speed disaster relief to the counties in Indiana that the Governor has requested. I encourage the volunteers for their determination to move forward as the rain approaches, and I urge prayers by all of our citizens to remember the Psalmist wrote that God is our refuge and our strength. Though the Earth be removed, though its waters roar and be troubled, we will not fear.

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF IRANIAN STUDENT PROTESTS

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

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, on the 4th of July, we celebrated our freedom. Today is the anniversary of the Iranian students' uprising a few years ago; 100,000 courageous, young Iranian men and women went to the streets of Teheran demanding their freedom, and their movement spread all over the country.

The mullahs in Teheran have suppressed them and still do; but hopefully, before too long, we will be able to see in Iran what we have seen in central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union, people living in free and open and democratic societies, rejecting the totalitarian police state of the mullahs, a regime which is determined to develop nuclear weapons and a regime which is the center of global support for terrorism.

SAVED

(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, recently I heard an amazing story. For 22 years, Jawad Amer Sayed was a dead man. Instead of fleeing into exile as a member of the Iraqi opposition group, he decided to stay; and for 22 years, he hid inside a false wall he built between two rooms in his home.

On April 10, the day after Saddam Hussein fell from power, Sayed emerged from his hideaway, to the amazement of relatives and friends. Only his mother, younger brother and two sisters knew what had happened to him. Everyone else thought he was dead.

Saddam Hussein murdered millions. Not only did he kill those opposed to him; he tortured them and their families, and his brutality forced millions into exile from fear. Sayed's story is a testament to that fear. Rather than torture and death, Sayed chose solitary confinement.

There are millions of Iraqis like Sayed who have come out of hiding into the light of day. Now they can talk about freedom. Now they can protest. Now they can worship freely. Now they can express opinions about their government, and now they can choose something other than death or confinement. They can choose liberty.

RISING UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the President bothers to take a look outside his helicopter window on his way from Crawford, Texas, to the White House to see the millions of people pounding the pavement looking for jobs.

Once again, the national unemployment rate has risen. It is now 6.4 percent, up from 6.1 percent in May; and the unemployment rate for Hispanics, it is even higher, up to 8.4 percent.

Moreover, millions of students across the country this month are graduating from college, with over \$20,000 in debt from student loans, wondering if they are going to get a job to begin to pay off those loans.

With the economy in a state of flux at home, what does the President say? He says "bring 'em on" to those who are attacking troops in Iraq. If the President wants to bring something on, how about a fiscal plan that creates jobs, that does not plunge us further into debt and that allows us to care for seniors in their golden years?

It is unfortunate that he cannot be as confident and cavalier about the future of our economy as he is being about the lives of our troops.

MEDICAL LIABILITY CRISIS

(Mrs. BIGGERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, my home State of Illinois has been especially hard hit by the steep rise in medical malpractice insurance rates. In the greater Chicago area, premiums have increased between 24 and 34 percent over the past year. As a result, physicians cannot afford to keep treating patients and are forced to either limit what patients they can treat or close down their practice.

When doctors cannot afford to keep their practices open, patients suffer; and because doctors in high-risk specialties like OB/GYN are hit the hardest, women patients suffer the most.

The same thing is happening all over the country, with one exception. California already has in place a State law very similar to legislation the House passed earlier this year, and it is working.

I urge my colleagues in the other body to pass medical malpractice reform legislation and make sure patients' access to health care does not suffer.

MALPRACTICE BILL IS A CRITICAL ISSUE FOR PHYSICIANS

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, this week the Senate will take up their malpractice bill. This is a critical issue for physicians; and it should provide real relief, not just be a political tool.

Like the one the House passed, all the Republican bill in the other body would do is cap the punitive and non-economic damages and limit attorneys' fees. While some level of caps may need to be a part of effective legislation, this measure is just an attack on lawyers who they see as supporters of Democrats.

□ 1015

The cap is not fully researched and is likely to hurt poorer and younger patients. Caps alone do not lower malpractice premiums as shown in a recent study of seven States that passed cap legislation where premiums continue to rise.

The American people are tired of political responses to important issues. The better Democrat approach is comprehensive, would bring insurance companies under the antitrust laws, and possibly cap premiums while a task force studies the best way to move ahead. Republicans would apply a simple political Band-Aid to this major wound from which the medical community is hemorrhaging and in the process free insurance and managed care companies from any accountability for decisions they make on our care by including them in a cap that is meaningless with their huge profits. That is the whole purpose of the bill, protecting corporate friends. It is not good medicine. This Congress should spit it out.