

active member of the New Hampshire chapter of the Disabled American Veterans and was to be installed as the next DAV commander at the State convention in June.

Recently, Joe received letters of encouragement and appreciation from President George W. Bush, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and New Hampshire Governor Craig Benson for his work within the veterans community.

Mr. Speaker, we are all at a great loss because of Joe Ford's passing, but can be comforted by knowing he made a lasting impact through his life's work. I am honored to bring his life to the attention of this body of Congress and to our Nation today.

My thoughts are with Joe's wife, Lillian; his two children, Paul and Mary; and all those who knew Joe, especially those throughout the veterans community during this difficult time of bereavement.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m. today.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

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

Lord God, You speak to Your people through prophets and leaders as of old. Be with Your people now and guide the leaders of this government as You did in the days of Habakkuk, the prophet.

When the cry for help was raised, You did not seem to listen. When the shout of violence was heard in the streets, You seemed not to intervene. But then You, O Lord, answered and said through the prophet, "The vision still has its time. Press on to its fulfillment and it will not disappoint. The just man because of his faith shall live."

Help us never to lose vision which provides hope. The value of such faith does not depend on fulfillment of expectation, but gives power to transform the lives of the faithful, to wait, to work with faith both today and forever. 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.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. 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.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. 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 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. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of California 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.

SALUTING CITIZENS OF PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY, VIRGINIA, ON THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDING

(Mr. GOODE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, Prince Edward County is marking the 250th anniversary of its founding on January 1, 1754, by act of the Virginia General Assembly. Prince Edward County played a vital role in the early days of the history of this Nation as an agricultural and major shipping distribution center.

Prince Edward County is the home to two premier institutions of higher learning, Hampden-Sydney College and Longwood University. Prince Edward County counts among its most honored natives two men who held governorships of other States, Henry Watkins Allen in Louisiana and Sterling Price in Missouri. Also, General Joseph E. Johnston of the Confederate Army is a native son as well as civil rights leader Dr. Vernon Johns; J. B. Fuqua, philanthropist; and the first African American United States Senator, Blanche K. Bruce; as well as Lieutenant General Sam V. Wilson, former president of Hampden-Sydney College.

Prince Edward County has also been called home by such noted persons as Virginia Governor Phillip McKinney; civil rights leader Reverend L. Francis Griffin; president of Tuskegee Institute, Robert Russa Moton; and medical researcher D. Walter Reed.

Prince Edward County also played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement of the 1950s as part of the Brown v. Board of Education suit.

In closing, I salute the citizens of Prince Edward County in recognition of their 250th anniversary.

KICKING THE RECOVERY INTO HIGH GEAR

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, during this final week before the spring break, the House will cap off a strong winter of work helping the American people grow the economy and create jobs. With positive economic news continuing to come in, we can be sure times are good, yet equally sure they are not perfect.

More Americans are working today than at any time in our history. Unemployment and interest rates remain low, the budget we passed last week is pointing the way toward fiscal accountability, and every day that passes brings us another day closer to victory in the war on terror.

But, Mr. Speaker, our manufacturing industry continues to feel the squeeze of outsourcing; and certain segments of the population have not yet come to fully enjoy the economic recovery evidenced in all this economic data. People are still hurting. But thankfully, more help will soon be on the way. This week the House will consider the long-awaited Federal highway reauthorization bill, which will set and deliver on the highway transportation investment priorities for the rest of the decade. It is estimated that every billion dollars spent on highways creates 47,500 jobs. The TEA-LU bill we will take up this week will authorize \$275 billion over the next 6 years.

This is a jobs bill, plain and simple. When a new highway is built, new neighborhoods follow, then businesses to serve those neighborhoods, and then businesses to serve those businesses. A highway does not just mean asphalt. It means families and car pools and schools and office parks and grocery stores and shopping malls. It means more new jobs, from waiters and convenience store clerks to doctors and stockbrokers. Added to the tax relief Congress passed in 2001 and 2003, the highway bill will further grow the American economy, creating jobs, expanding opportunity, and changing lives along the way.

Less than a week since we passed one of the strongest, most pro-growth budgets in history and less than a week before we receive March job creation numbers, now is the perfect time for us to move on the highway bill. It is time, Mr. Speaker, to help the American people kick our economic recovery into high gear.

WE HAVE REASON TO BE SKEPTICAL OF RICHARD CLARKE

(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 want to know which Richard Clarke we are supposed to believe. On his watch for 8 years our country suffered four terrorist attacks: in 1993 the New York World Trade Center, the Khobar Towers in 1996, in 1998 two African U.S. embassies, and in 2000 they attacked the USS *Cole*. Then in 2001, the 9/11 attacks occurred. The Clinton administration did nothing. It merely attacked some empty tents and a Sudan aspirin factory with a few cruise missiles. Richard Clarke himself admitted to PBS in 2002 that they should have taken out terrorist camps in Afghanistan in the 90s; but, according to him, there were "other considerations" that prevented this action.

Now Clarke attacks the Bush administration. Now he is suggesting that going into Iraq has diverted us from the more important goal of defeating al Qaeda, that we cannot do both. He is wrong. When we were attacked on 9/11, President Bush did not waste any time. He used the full power of our Nation to take out the Taliban and hunt down terrorists. Clarke even praised the President for his leadership.

Richard Clarke is guilty of the worst kind of spin, changing his story to avoid blame and make a profit on his new book.

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF MEDICARE MODERNIZATION ACT

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to talk on the Medicare Modernization Act. Tax-free health savings accounts that are accumulative allows the individual to pick up basic health care costs and shop around for quality and service, one of the great benefits of the Medicare Modernization Act. The other thing is then moving individuals into catastrophic health insurance plans which will be, obviously, in essence a lot lower than health care costs today. What people fear is the ability to lose their life savings on catastrophic illnesses. By having the catastrophic health insurance account, that will not occur and it will be at a cost that people can assume. But the only way we are going to bring down health care costs in America is to make sure that the consumer is involved in choosing their services based upon quality and service. No middlemen, the consumer. That is the benefit of the health savings account. The Medicare Modernization Act was real reform, and I am proud to have supported it.

MEDICARE

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I was at home this weekend in the good Seventh District of Tennessee reading the Nashville Tennessean and there on the front page of the business section was a story with the headline, "Some Seniors Begin to See Benefit From Medicare."

Mr. Speaker, if you had been listening to the Democrats for the past 6 months, you would be stunned that the seniors were going to see benefits from Medicare. But here it is in black and white. This is what the story says:

"Seniors who do belong to a Medicare HMO have been showered with new benefits thanks to the Medicare Modernization Act Congress passed last year."

And this is all before the prescription drug card and the eventual prescription drug benefit even take place. Clearly, the Medicare reform President Bush and this Congress passed is helping seniors and that is exactly what it is supposed to do.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, when we were off a couple of months ago debating the Medicare bill, we were told it was going to cost \$400 billion. We found out all along everybody knew it would cost \$550 billion, and nobody was told the absolute truth. Most importantly, you were not told. Not a single new benefit has gone to a senior citizen and the taxpayers are stuck with another \$150 billion hit. Now everybody wants to talk about the benefit that is going to come with a discount card giving a 25 percent discount. The costs of prescription drugs at the pharmacy are rising on average 19 percent a year for the last 7 years. So what you are going to see is what we all know happens at Neiman Marcus right before a sale, prices get jacked up as high as they can and then they offer a sale to give you a discount from the inflated prices. That is what is happening to prescription drugs right now at the pharmacy.

Seniors on average pay 40 to 50 percent more for their prescription drugs than people in Canada and Europe for the same drugs that have been developed here in the United States. What we need is a reimportation bill to bring the prices down, make them competitive, and get world-class drugs at world market prices rather than the 50 percent inflated prices that we pay here in America.

UNBORN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ACT HEADING TO PRESIDENT'S DESK

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when a woman is attacked

and her child is killed, there is presently no penalty for the death of the child. Until now. Just last week, the Senate passed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, also known as Laci and Conner's Law. It is on its way to the President's desk. Laci and Conner's Law declares that in an assault on a pregnant woman when a child is injured or killed, there are two victims. It makes the killing of an unborn child a prosecutable offense while specifically exempting abortions that are currently protected under *Roe v. Wade*.

The overwhelming majority, 80 percent of Americans, support the idea this law represents. They believe there are two victims, and they are right. Criminals are getting away with killing children, in many cases just days before delivery. This new law will put America back on record as valuing the lives of its children.

I want to again thank President Bush for his unwavering leadership on protecting and educating all of America's children.

PRICE OF GAS HITS ALL-TIME HIGH

(Mr. MARKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARKEY. Ladies and gentlemen, America now has the highest gasoline prices in history. OPEC is meeting once again to cut the amount of oil it is providing to the United States even as we have 130,000 young men and women over in the Middle East. That is a disgrace.

President Bush must insist that OPEC increase its production of oil. We should not suffer. The Christians had a better chance against the lions than the American consumer has against the OPEC cartel. We need a President who is not going to allow OPEC to tip us upside down and shake money out of the pockets of the American consumer. President Bush must insist that OPEC give to the United States what it deserves, an economy which is not harmed by OPEC with these rising oil prices which make it impossible for consumers to pay their bills or businesses to invest in any other service or product with the exception of their oil bill.

Tomorrow is the day, Mr. President. Let us have some relief for the American consumer and for the American businessman so our economy can grow.

□ 1015

IN SUPPORT OF AMENDMENT TO THE TRANSPORTATION BILL

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I come to speak about a very disturbing trend that we have here in Congress that both parties are guilty of perpetuating.

In 1982, in the Surface Transportation Assistance Act, when it was