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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Monsignor James C. Kidder, Pastor, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, El Dorado, California, offered the following prayer:

O God, our loving Creator, our experience of Your fidelity in our lives can often be overshadowed by our fears of the future. We know the uncertainty of our plans and the difficulties we face in our aspirations. We need hope. Not false hopes that are unstable, but the hope of faith that can support and give courage. Your fidelity, Lord, is unchanging. You do not retreat. You do not know deception. Your fidelity is our hope.

Help us to be mirrors of Your fidelity, for the first, the last, and the greatest gift we have to offer others is our life. Help us to exist for those who entrust their well-being to us. A complete gift as great as this does require Your fidelity to us.

On this first day of April which could be filled with pranks, illusion, and humor, we thank You for the ability to laugh, which is a gift from You to release the tensions pent-up within and to open our eyes to envision Your truth all the more. We thank You, too, for the gift of a smile, a wonder that we can freely share to brighten the days of others. May we go forth today to share that gift generously. 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. ISRAEL 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 a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 275. An act to amend the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996, and to establish the United States Boxing Administration.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. There will be ten 1-minutes on each side.

THE OIL FOR FOOD SCANDAL

(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, the United Nations has a terrible track record on appeasing dictators. The growing scandal surrounding the Iraqi Oil for Food program is a good example.

While the Iraqi people suffered from shortages of food and medicines, Saddam Hussein looted billions of dollars in U.N. aid to fund his military and buy friends around the world.

Manufacturers and trade brokers in Europe, Russia, China, and the Arab world benefited from billions Saddam Hussein funneled to them, all courtesy of the U.N. Oil for Food program. Those who profited from Saddam's generosity have become propaganda mouthpieces for his corrupt regime.

As Saddam's friends criticized how sanctions made the Iraqi people suffer, they pocketed billions of aid intended for the people they claimed to care

about. No wonder they were against liberating the Iraqi people. They were profiting off of their suffering.

These coconspirators with Saddam Hussein should be exposed. Their selfishness and deceit have cost Iraqi lives.

WHITE HOUSE THREATENS VETO OF TRANSPORTATION BILL

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, 2.8 million jobs lost, 1.1 million long-term unemployed with expired benefits, 24 months into a jobless recovery spurred by record deficits and trickle-down tax cuts. But finally, today, hope is on the horizon.

Mr. Speaker, a \$275 billion highway bill, it should be more, is pending. It would create real jobs to meet real needs, put Americans to work; and, yet, the White House is threatening a veto. April fool, or is it fools at the White House?

COURT OF APPEALS CONSIDERS PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION

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

Mr. Speaker, currently, the Court of Appeals is working on the partial-birth abortion ban which we passed in this House twice during the past year and the President signed into law in December.

Mr. Speaker, it has been over 25 years since I first learned of the procedure of newborn circumcision, not something we normally think of in this House, but, Mr. Speaker, it would be unthinkable today to perform that procedure without some type of anesthesia, because we all know that a newborn feels pain.

But we are asked to discount the possibility of fetal pain perception when

□ 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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dealing with the language of partial-birth abortion. We are asked to suspend our knowledge of pain pathways and assume that a scalpel laceration, skull fracture, dural tear, and brain laceration will pass unnoticed by the child, as long as his or her head is still in the birth canal.

By any measure, intact dilatation and extraction performed in the last trimester of pregnancy is never the only option for concluding a pregnancy when the mother's health is compromised. Induction of labor or Cesarean section may both be used to complete a pregnancy when the mother's health is threatened.

The only theoretic advantage of a partial-birth abortion is this: It guarantees that the baby will be dead upon delivery.

BEWARE OF BUSH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS BEARING MEDICARE BENEFITS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, when the House voted on the Medicare bill, we and the American people were told its cost was \$400 billion. Later, we found out that the Bush administration and congressional leaders knew all along it would cost actually \$550 billion. What is a mere \$150 billion among friends?

Not a single benefit has gone to a senior citizen, and the taxpayers are stuck with an additional \$150 billion on top of the misappropriated \$400 billion. Beware of Bush administration officials bearing Medicare benefits.

Prescription drug costs have skyrocketed over the last several years, six times the rate of inflation. It is like a sale at Nieman Marcus: Prices are jacked up by 50 percent before the discount of 25 percent.

In 2001, drug costs increased by 16 percent; in 2002, 18 percent; in 2003, 19.5 percent. The prescription drug benefit will do nothing to protect senior citizens from skyrocketing cost increases.

Instead of depending on a flawed Medicare law that punishes taxpayers and does little to help our senior citizens, we need to lower drug prices here in the United States by allowing competition and choice to exist in the market and allow people to buy their drugs in Canada and Europe where they are 50 percent cheaper than here in the United States.

RECOGNITION OF UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN BELARUS

(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 rise today to bring attention to the upcoming elections in Belarus.

While most of the former Eastern Bloc countries have demonstrated

varying degrees of democratic progress since the Soviet collapse, Belarus has slipped back into a Soviet Union-style dictatorship. Belarus's current President, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, was elected in July, 1994. The country's political and economic repression intensified in 1996 when President Lukashenka orchestrated passage of a constitutional referendum that provided him control over all of the branches of government and society as a whole. The President then disbanded the parliament, and only those members loyal to him chose to serve in the new legislature. He extended his term of office to 2001, and the 2001 election lacked transparency and democratic administration.

In response to the repressive political environment, we need to focus our efforts on helping to promote an institutional survival of the country's democratic political organizations and helping their leaders and activists prepare for political and public policy roles in a future democratic Belarus.

The important thing for the current regime in Belarus to understand is that Washington and the world are watching.

MOURNING THE DEATHS IN FALLUJAH

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, if we wanted to understand the line that divides good versus evil, it was drawn in Fallujah yesterday.

Four people were providing security to deliver food to the people of Fallujah, and some of the people that they were seeking to feed killed them, mutilated them, massacred them.

Mr. Speaker, today's Wall Street Journal said this of the situation in Iraq: "It is not a good sign that Iraqis feel free to mutilate the bodies of dead Americans in front of the world's TV cameras." Then it goes on to say, "A year without justice has also been a year without enough deterrence, and Fallujah now have more reasons to fear the consequences of working with the Americans than the consequences of killing them."

Today we mourn the deaths of four people who believed in a better world.

In the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department, we must redouble efforts to ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes are punished. Justice will lead to security, security will lead to stability, stability will lead to democracy, and democracy will bring again justice and liberty for all.

HONORING THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS OF INDIAN ORIGIN

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the important work of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, or AAPI, which includes 35,000 physicians and 10,000 medical students and residents throughout America.

Indian-American physicians have been pioneers in medicine and health care for centuries, and by working together through AAPI, they have made important contributions to the American medical profession. In South Carolina, Indian-American doctors such as Dr. Kaushal Sinha are especially meaningful, giving service in rural communities.

Also, an Indian-American, Dr. Seshadri Raju, performed a life-saving double-lung transplant on my predecessor and mentor, the late Congressman Floyd Spence. Congressman Spence incredibly lived an additional 13 years thanks to Dr. Raju and then was able to serve his country as chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking AAPI for their visionary leadership in health care, particularly President Dr. Sharad Lakhapal, as well as Dr. Rakesh Shreedhar, Dr. Sampat Shivangi, and Dr. Raghavendra Vijayanagar.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

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PRESIDENT BUSH SHOULD TAKE HIS OWN ADVICE TO HEART

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

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration refuses to jawbone or pressure OPEC to increase oil production while the American consumer at the gas pump is being tipped upside down and money is being shaken out of their pockets every single day. This is wrong. The President should jawbone OPEC to increase oil production, not to lower the production of oil.

Here is what the President said to Bill Clinton 4 years ago. He said, "What I think President Clinton ought to do is to get on the phone with OPEC and to say we expect you to open your spigots. One reason why the price is so high is because the price of crude oil has been driven up. OPEC has gotten its supply act together and is driving up the price like it did in the past. And the President of the United States must jawbone OPEC members to lower the price." That is the advice George Bush as candidate gave to Bill Clinton.

Now that he is President, he says he cannot jawbone OPEC, that it would be wrong; but the price is being paid by the consumer at the gas pump every single day.