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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Commander Maurice S. Kaprow, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Naval Reserve, Norfolk, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, today as we gather in this historic and august chamber, we pause to thank You for the many blessings You have bestowed upon our Nation, our constituents, and ourselves. Thank You for making us the strongest, most democratic and compassionate Nation in this wonderful, yet troubled world.

As we meet here in the safety of this House of Representatives, let us remember the many members of our Armed Forces, especially those serving far from home in the midst of danger, at the tip of the spear, bringing the hope of democracy where tyranny once ruled, and the specter of peace to those who for years cowered in terror and lived in tumult.

We pray for the safe return of those deployed to the four corners of the Earth, sailors and Marines, soldiers, airmen, and Coast Guardsmen. Guard their families and give them strength to endure until their service members return to their homes to welcoming arms and the warm embrace of those they love.

Grant us all life and peace, courage and wisdom, as we act today and every day in the best interests of the citizens of these United States, while being ever mindful of those throughout the world community. And let us, say, 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 gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. MUSGRAVE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. MUSGRAVE 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.

INVESTIGATION NEEDED OF OIL FOR FOOD PROGRAM

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

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, 7 years ago the United Nations established an Oil for Food program intended for humanitarian relief. Oil was sold to finance the purchase of food, medicine and other relief necessities for the Iraqi people.

The General Accounting Office estimates that more than \$10 billion was stolen from the Oil For Food program. Money that was to help the Iraqi people went to pay off politicians and executives, build a \$20 million Olympic sport facility for Uday Hussein, and spent over \$50 million for promotion for the Husseins' propaganda. They may have even financed weapons that are now being used against our troops.

Oil for Food was the largest UN program in the world at one time. The Iraqi people are owed an explanation for the exploitation of their resources. And if the United Nations is to be treated credibly, they must assist in the investigation of where this money went to; \$10 billion stolen from the Iraqi people. The U.N. needs to come clean on this issue and share with the people where these dollars went.

EDUCATION IN AMERICA

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

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, as the proud son of public school educators and a father of two children attending public school, I am concerned about the state of education in America.

Education is one of America's most fundamental building blocks. A solid education system is what drives our Nation's prosperity and paves the way to a brighter future for our great country. Yet, our President, for the third year in a row, wants to cut funding for our public education system. Though the President promised to support our teachers, he tried to cut teacher quality programs by \$268 million in the 2004 budget.

Our President has repeatedly slashed funding for the Pell grants, which allows thousands of deserving students the opportunity to go to college. And his proposed budget for 2005 slashes funding for the No Child Left Behind program which the President has repeatedly identified as one of his top priorities by \$8 billion.

Our children deserve a real education system that provides them with a solid, quality education.

WIRELESS PHONES AND 911 CALLS

(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, not long ago, all 911 calls were local calls made on wireline phones. Today, it is estimated that nearly 130 million wireless phones are in use, generating an average of 150,000 calls to 911 each day. However, few people realize that most wireless 911 calls do not go to the nearest public safety answering point, do

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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not provide the caller's call-back number, nor do they provide the caller's location.

In some areas, wireless callers get an automated voice instead of help when they dial 911.

The House passed legislation earlier this year which I introduced with my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), that attempts to solve these problems by enhancing the coordination of E-911 implementation in each State, discouraging the raiding of E-911 funds, and giving local PSAPs additional funding to help them finally achieve and enhance 911 capability.

It is my hope we can get this legislation to the President before the end of the year so local communities can begin upgrading their 911 systems and help first responders locate those in need as quickly as possible.

HONORING NATHAN BRUCKENTHAL

(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, on April 24, Nathan Bruckenthal became the first member of the Coast Guard to die in battle since Vietnam. His bravery and sacrifice shines a light on the often overlooked sacrifices made by the Coast Guard in our Nation's defense.

Nathan is survived by a proud father in Northport, New York, village police chief Rick Bruckenthal and his wife, Patricia, a loving mother, Laurie Bullock of Ashburn, Virginia. Nate is also the brother of Matthew, Michael and Noa Beth, and the husband of Patricia in Florida.

When I called Rick Bruckenthal, he simply said, "My son served his country." He did serve and he did sacrifice. And now we have an eternal debt to his memory and his family, to support our troops when we send them into dangerous places, to support their families back home, to support our veterans, to do these things in our hearts, in our budgets, and in our prayers which are with the family of Nathan Bruckenthal, the police department of Northport Village, the United States Coast Guard and Bates Neck Station, today and all days.

God bless the Bruckenthal family and God bless America.

COMBATING CARGO THEFT

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk today about a little known crime that has an enormous impact on all of our congressional districts.

Every day our country loses millions of dollars to interstate cargo theft, a crime that is occurring on highways across our country. Any crime that threatens this flow of goods should be dealt with quickly.

The fact that cargo theft is now being tied to the funding of terror makes it critical that we address this crime on the Federal level. I have introduced a bill, the Cargo Theft Prevention Act, which seeks to bring this crime out of the shadows and to finally hold criminals accountable.

With stricter criminal penalties and better information sharing, this bill will finally give both lawmakers and law enforcement officials the tools they need to combat this growing crime. With support from the American Trucking Association and multiple law enforcement groups, I hope all of you will join me in cosponsoring H.R. 3563, The Cargo Theft Prevention Act.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

(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, President Kennedy once said, "An error does not become a mistake until you refuse to correct it. Without debate, without criticism no administration and no country can succeed and no republic can survive."

Today, Members of this House and this Chamber have refused and said it is not time to have hearings in this Congress over what we have seen recently in Iraq. The men and women over there serving their country, our country, our friends, our neighbors, our constituents, are making us proud. This Congress has an obligation to ask questions of how and why this occurred, no matter where the criticism leads.

Our troops should not be used as scapegoats. Our civilian leaders need to be asked the questions, the Congress, all of us who got elected, all of us who take a pledge have a requirement to ask questions and seek the answers that our constituents sent us here.

NEW PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

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

Mr. REHBERG. There is an old adage, the louder your opponents protest, the more you know you are successful with what you are doing.

That is exactly what is happening with Medicare's new prescription drug coverage. Those who voted against the new prescription drug benefit are protesting what we have done because they do not think seniors are smart enough or capable enough to choose the prescription drug plan that is best for them. They want the program to fail for preliminary reasons.

All these protests are designed to draw attention away from the fact that for the first time more than 7 million low income seniors and younger people with disabilities are now eligible for much needed assistance.

According to the National Council on Aging, a national voluntary network of organizations and individuals dedicated to improving health and independence of our seniors, low income Medicare beneficiaries should absolutely apply for a new Medicare approved drug discount card and its \$600 annual transition assistance benefit.

Despite the shrill protests of those who voted against it and want it to fail, the power to save on prescription drugs is now in the hands of the seniors, and Republicans will help.

CINCO DE MAYO

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

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate a day that represents the importance of freedom, liberty and determination for the people of Mexico and for Mexican Americans.

On May 5, 1862, untrained, outnumbered and out-gunned Mexican forces determined to protect their land, successfully defended the town of Puebla against the French.

Against overwhelming odds, they managed to drive back the French Army, achieving a total victory over soldiers that were deemed the best trained and equipped in the world.

For Mexico, this day represents a symbol of unity and patriotism.

In this country, Cinco de Mayo is also a celebration of the rich cultural heritage Mexican-Americans and all Latinos have brought to the United States. Unfortunately, Latinos do not have much to celebrate this year.

This past month the Latino unemployment rate has remained an alarmingly high 7.4 percent. This is 28 percent higher than when President Bush took office and it is significantly higher than the national average.

This administration's misguided policies continue to create economic uncertainty for all working families.

Do not be fooled by the Marachis and pinatas at the White House today. This pomp and circumstance gives no relief to the 1.4 million unemployed Latinos.

COMMENDING THE SERVICE OF THE ARMED FORCES FOUNDATION

(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, this weekend I had the honor of joining the nonprofit Armed Forces Foundation in Columbia, South Carolina, for Military Appreciation Day. There I met with hundreds of military and family members who gather to enjoy a day of recreation, fishing and appreciation for their service.

Led by President Patricia Driscoll, along with fundraiser Wyatt Smith and founded by Jim Gorab, the Armed