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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 14, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAC THORNBERRY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) for 5 minutes.

REAGAN AND EMBRYO STEM CELL DEBATE

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, last week, our Nation mourned the loss of a great leader, Ronald Reagan. He led our Nation through a turbulent period of time. When he came to office, we were struggling with significant problems; with unemployment and inflation, and we were facing a significant threat from our Cold War adversary, the Soviet Union. Ronald Reagan's policies, as we all know, helped lift us out of depression, tamed inflation, and ultimately led to the breakup

of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Berlin wall, and freedom for millions of Eastern Europeans.

By and large, the celebration of the life of Ronald Reagan, I thought, was outstanding, except for what I would describe as one sour note. Repeatedly, liberals in the press and advocates for embryonic stem cell research were bringing this issue up as it relates to Ronald Reagan's Alzheimer's disease, indeed, holding out the absurd hope that embryonic stem cells could somehow be used one day to treat Alzheimer's disease.

Indeed, many people were implying by their comments and words that the policies pursued by George Bush limited access to embryonic stem cells out of a desire to avoid destroying human embryos. And that is really the essence of the controversial issue here, because to do human embryonic stem cell research you have to destroy a human embryo, a human life, in order to gather the cells. One newspaper, The Washington Post, even editorialized that if George Bush were to allow the destruction of human embryos, this would be a fitting tribute to the life of President Reagan. In that same newspaper, the very next day, was an article reporting how embryonic stem cells are unlikely ever to be useful in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

Indeed, one of the lead researchers in the United States, Dr. Ronald McKay, stem cell researcher at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, told Washington Post reporter Rick Weiss, "People need a fairy tale." And he went on to explain how "Alzheimer's disease is a whole-brain disease. It is not a cellular disease, and it is unlikely that embryonic stem cells would ever be useful for treating such a condition."

Now, what are the facts? What is the truth in this whole controversy? Because it is indeed a very confusing subject and it is very easy for poorly-informed reporters to mislead the public.

Well, the truth is embryonic stem cells have never been used to treat any human being for any disease ever. You will hear people repeatedly say that they hold great promise, supposedly. But as a matter of fact, they have never been used to treat anything. Even in animal models, where you use mouse or rat embryonic stem cells, they do not even have a good animal model to treat an animal disease with embryonic stem cells. However, adult stem cells, which are the stem cells that we get from our body, as opposed to destroying a human embryo to get the stem cells, our body is full of stem cells. They are in our bone marrow, in our fat, they are even in our nose.

Adult stem cells have been used in humans to treat Parkinson's Disease, to partially restore vision to someone who is legally blind, relieve systemic lupus, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, cure severe combined immunodeficiency disease, treat several types of cancers, such as leukemias, solid tumors, neuroblastomas, non-Hodgkins lymphoma, and renal cell carcinoma. Adult stem cells have been used to treat multiple sclerosis, treat children with the bubble boy syndrome, and treat heart failure in humans. Indeed, the FDA just recently approved a protocol to use adult stem cells in treating heart failure in humans.

So what is all the hub-bub? Why are all these people running around saying they want the Federal Government to fund all this embryonic stem cell research when it has really never been shown that it will have a clinical application, meanwhile the adult stem cells are showing all this great promise? Why is all this going on?

Well, the truth is that embryonic stem cell research is perfectly legal in the United States. There are no laws preventing it from being done. Every lab in America could do embryonic stem cell research. The issue here is who is going to pay for it, and the facts

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

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are that industry does not want to pay for it. They want the Federal Government to pay for it. The Federal government should not. It is unnecessary research and it is unethical.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND THE GROWING DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, for a moment, I want to talk about what our decision should be in this United States Congress as we approach another budget year. One of the big challenges of the Congress of the United States is the overspending of government, because it adds to the debt. Over promising adds to unfunded liabilities, and the question becomes, when is it time for Congress and the White House to start faxing and reducing the growth of the Federal Government?

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the time is now. We should start next year making changes in the programs, such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, where Congress has overpromised and does not have the revenue coming in to pay for these programs in the long run. That includes Social Security.

The reason I suggest now is a good time is because the economy is growing very rapidly, and I quote from an article in the U.S. News & World Report by Editor-in-Chief, Mort Zuckerman. "New jobs are being generated in large numbers, income is growing at twice the rate of last year, and the acceleration is such that we will probably see a 5 percent growth in the gross domestic product. Sixty-one percent of private industries surveyed have added workers. That is the highest in 4 years. Business confidence has surged to a 20-year high, and business spending is exploding. The productivity boom, meanwhile, has made it possible to keep inflation under 2 percent, saving consumers billions. This has been due not just to technology but to tighter and better management controls. We are on a trajectory toward extraordinary growth in the second half of 2004 that will beget stronger job and income growth."

So the situation that we have been facing is increasing the deficit over \$500 billion a year. A deficit is the overspending in one budget year of the Federal Government; spending that exceeds all revenue coming in. This year, we are looking at \$536 billion. For the next 3 years, at least, it is going to be over \$500 billion at the rate we are going.

And let me put that in a little bit of perspective. We are a country that is about 228 years old. It took the first 200 years of this country to accumulate a debt of \$500 billion. Now we are going deeper into debt, more than \$500 billion

every year. It is time that Congress and the White House did what every family has to do, what every business has to do, and that is tighten our belts and not continue to spend more than the revenue coming in.

Some suggest we should simply increase taxes to accommodate increased spending. I am suggesting that we should prioritize spending, start slowing down the growth in spending, so we are not increasing the size of government by more than three or four times the rate of inflation.

Overspending is one issue that we are laying on future generations; the other is overpromising. Overpromising is what the budget people call unfunded liabilities. Unfunded liabilities are promises that Congress and the White House have made over and above the revenues coming in to pay for those promises. The major categories are Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. The experts predict that unfunded liabilities of this country now amount to over \$73 trillion. The money is not going to be there. And so the only ramification is to load our next generation and our young people with either the responsibility of paying for the interest on that increasing debt or increasing taxes.

It is irresponsible for Congress and the White House not to face up to some of the promises that we have made instead of pretending that the problem somehow is going to be paid for by future generations that are going to have their own problems.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would just simply suggest that every voter in America, when they go to candidate forums, ask that individual running for Congress or for the United States Senate or for President what their plans are to save Social Security and their plans to stop the overspending. The kind of debt that we are passing on to future generations is unacceptable.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 42 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Pictures or words are usually one-dimensional. Symbols, however, are beyond language and have meaning all their own. A symbol is more than a substitute or a representation, because

a symbol contains multiple levels of significance for different people all at the same time. A flag is a symbol for a nation, as an escutcheon is a symbol for a family or a logo, a symbol for a company.

Today is Flag Day here in the United States of America. The American flag, its history and its importance is honored this day by Americans everywhere.

Lord God, when we salute the flag or pledge our allegiance facing the flag, we are making a statement of loyalty and patriotism to this country. For us here in the House of Representatives, in our prayer we dedicate ourselves and our work to You. In our pledge to the flag, we commit ourselves to uphold the American Constitution and to work for the citizenry of this great Nation.

Whether we are here as elected Members or as persons who choose to work in this great institution, we ask You to guide and protect this Nation we love and are proud to call our homeland. Be with us and all Americans, especially our military forces who are defending the flying of this flag. Long may our flag wave as a symbol of freedom and equal justice under the law, now 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RENZI 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 bills and a joint resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested.

S. 2017. An act to designate the United States courthouse and post office building located at 93 Atocha Street in Ponce, Puerto Rico, as the "Luis A. Ferré United States Courthouse and Post Office Building".

S. 2214. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service, located at 3150 Great Northern Avenue in Missoula, Montana, as the "Mike Mansfield Post Office".

S. 2415. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4141 Postmark Drive, Anchorage, Alaska, as the "Robert J. Opinsky Post Office Building".

S.J. Res. 38. Joint resolution providing for the appointment of Eli Broad as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.