

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 13, 2004.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 13, 2004 at 10:10 a.m.

That the Senate passed without amendment H. Con. Res. 361.

Appointments:
Board of Visitors United States Naval Academy.
Board of Visitors United States Air Force Academy.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAH, L.
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the Speaker pro tempore signed the following enrolled bills on Thursday, February 19, 2004:

H.R. 743, to amend the Social Security Act and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide additional safeguards for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries with representative payees, to enhance program protections, and for other purposes;

S. 523, to make technical corrections to laws relating to Native Americans, and for other purposes.

REMEMBERING VICTIMS OF BROTHERS TO THE RESCUE SHOOTDOWN ON EIGHTH ANNI- VERSARY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro, Mario de la Pena, and Pablo Morales, who, 8 years ago today, were murdered by the terrorist regime in Havana.

These four brave men, committed to the cause of freedom and democracy in Cuba, ventured out over international waters in search of those who risked it all to reach here, the United States, the land of liberty. But what they came face to face with was the evil, ruthless, and brutal nature of the Castro dictatorship in the form of MiG-29 fighter jets. Like vultures circling their prey, these MiGs closed in, and at 3:21 and 3:27 p.m. aimed their missiles and destroyed these two Brothers to the Rescue planes.

There would be no international outcry. Yet their deaths at the hands of the tyrant and his agents of terror would serve as a catalyst, a call to action, a new Grito de Baire, for Cuba's internal opposition.

I ask my colleagues to remember these fallen heroes, Carlos, Armando,

Mario, and Pablo, and to pray for the enslaved people of Cuba.

ETHICAL CLOUD HANGING OVER WASHINGTON GROWS DARKER

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, the ethical cloud hanging over Republicans in Washington grows darker.

Every good lawyer and judge knows the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest. Last month, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia went hunting in Louisiana with Vice President CHENEY, on land owned by an oil executive. They flew on Air Force Two, at taxpayer expense.

Three weeks earlier, the Supreme Court agreed to decide *In Re Cheney*, a case brought to force Vice President CHENEY to disclose information about his secret energy task force meetings with oil executives. Justice Scalia said afterwards, "I do not think my impartiality could reasonably be questioned."

He is wrong. He has no business deciding a case of enormous significance to his friend and hunting companion.

To preserve the integrity of the Supreme Court and to maintain the trust of the public, Justice Scalia should recuse himself from any role in the Cheney case. And Vice President CHENEY should have been the first to ask him to do so.

IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED CON- STITUTIONAL AMENDMENT RE- GARDING MARRIAGE

(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, after weeks of legal and moral confusion, from Massachusetts to California, today President George W. Bush called on this Congress to adopt a constitutional amendment defining marriage historically and culturally as it has ever been, as the union between a man and a woman. In so doing, President George W. Bush brought moral clarity to the debate by calling for this amendment banning gay marriage, in his words, preventing courts from changing that "most enduring of human institutions."

And so marriage is. Ordained by God, confirmed by law, marriage is the glue of the family and the safest harbor for children. Congress should heed President Bush's courageous moral leadership, pass the marriage amendment, and affirm the confidence of the American people in our ability to defend their most cherished of institutions.

A WEAPON OF MASS DISTRACTION

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Well, there they go again. The Commander in Chief has signalled the start of the culture wars, so they are here with their wedge politics, trying to divide us, trying to divide us as a Nation.

Three million jobs lost since this President took office, a war in Iraq that we cannot seem to win, 545 of our bravest young men and women killed, more waiting as sitting ducks; but what we are going to talk about in this House is a constitutional amendment to preserve marriage. Talk about wedge politics at its finest. Talk about something to divide the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Indiana, and I assume all those who are going to come after him, should look at the history of the United States and the Constitution, the Constitution which represents for us expanding the rights of all Americans, expanding.

We went from giving the right to citizenship to African Americans to giving the right to vote to women, always expanding what the American Dream was about, always expanding what America ought to be. But now we are going to pass an amendment that restricts rights. Now we are going to pass an amendment that says do not look at jobs, do not look at the war in Iraq, do not look at any of the things that bother the American people at their dinner table, their lack of health insurance, their lack of quality education. No, let us focus on this constitutional amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the Commander in Chief has unleashed his Weapon of Mass Distraction.

UNBORN VICTIMS AND MORAL LEADERSHIP

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, this week the House will hear a lot, on the floor and off the floor, about the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, also known as Laci and Conner's Law, which acknowledges the victimhood of unborn children injured during attacks against their pregnant mothers.

Though the bill says nothing about *Roe v. Wade*, *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*, or any abortion law at any level of government in this Nation, we will hear false arguments to the contrary. We will hear the usual arguments, from the usual suspects, that any legislation that in any way recognizes the humanity of unborn children is an assault on the Constitution.

Those of us who support this legislation, who, I should add, represent a point of view shared by more than 80 percent of the American people, will be scolded and have fingers wagged at us by people telling us in ominous tones that they "know what we are doing."

Well, I should hope so. I hope the whole world knows what we are doing,

sees the stands that we are taking on behalf of pregnant mothers and their families, providing justice and codifying common sense.

There is nothing in Laci and Conner's Law we should hide from. Indeed, so intuitive is the notion that an attack against a pregnant mother involves two victims, so essential to both natural law and basic human experience, that I would venture to guess that even most children in this country just assume that legislation like the Unborn Victims of Violence Act is already on the books.

This is a no-brainer, Mr. Speaker. Of course Laci and Conner's Law should be passed. Of course this House and this Nation can stand up for pregnant women and their families and acknowledge the injuries their children suffer at the hand of violent predators and set penalties accordingly.

Defending the family is part of our core agenda in this Congress, and passing Laci and Conner's Law is one of the ways we can fulfill it. After all, what kind of moral leaders would we be if, given the choice, we rejected the natural instinct of all people that they all have to recoil at news of violence against pregnant mothers?

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, come Thursday's vote, we will not have to find out.

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION SHOULD RESIGN

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Secretary of Education branded the 2.7 million teacher-strong National Education Association a "terrorist organization."

Mr. Paige's words were a hateful comment, beneath the dignity of any Cabinet Secretary. Rather than trying to achieve the highest standards of civility, setting the best example for American children, Mr. Paige's "teachable moment" was to stand in the White House and vilify the NEA and America's teachers by labeling them terrorists, in effect, enemies of America.

This vile language was no joke. It was not insensitive. In fact, it was a deliberate attack, an example of neo-McCarthyism at its worst.

The Secretary's words harmed public education, and they were clear in their intent to threaten the millions of American citizens that the NEA honorably represents.

It is time for Mr. Paige to resign. Resign now, sir.

THANKING ERIC THOMPSON FOR 35 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

(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 commend a South Carolinian who has been a model of public service for the last 35 years. Eric Thompson of North Augusta, South Carolina, retired this January from his post as executive director of the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, where he had worked since 1981.

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The Council is a regional planning and development organization serving 6 counties and 45 incorporated municipalities.

Mr. Thompson has helped the Lower Savannah Council secure nearly \$172 million in State and Federal grants for cities and counties in the region, which includes Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, and Orangeburg Counties. He has worked previously as part of planning commissions for Aiken and Brunswick-Glynn County, and currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Development Organizations, where he has served as president.

South Carolina is so thankful for Eric Thompson's dedication to our State, and I ask all of my colleagues to join me in commending him for his commitment to public service.

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

BLUE DOG DEFICIT UPDATE

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

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, today we owe the country \$7,078 billion, being swept under the rug every day. Foreign holdings of our debt now total \$1.5 trillion. Foreign investors financed 70 percent of our record \$373 billion debt last year. In January of 2002, foreign investors held \$1 trillion of our U.S. debt; today it is \$1.5 trillion. Japan holds \$545 billion, and China holds \$149 billion of our debt. By far, the United States' largest foreign aid program is our interest payments to foreign investors, yet we continue to not want to change our economic game plan to do something about it. The largest single debt tax increase in the history of our country is being perpetrated on us today.

Mr. Speaker, \$7,078 billion, that is what we owe today.

MAKE TAX RELIEF PERMANENT

(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 economic numbers we are seeing right now do not lie. Our economy is growing and jobs are being created, but to stay on that track, we need to keep our economy growing. Growth encourages busi-

ness expansion and entrepreneurship, both of which lead to new jobs, and tax relief encourages growth. That is what we have seen this year.

When small businesses and working families keep more of their own money, they spend it far better than we do here in Washington. But many, even many here in this Chamber today, do not believe that. So we will hear lots of talk about repealing tax cuts and spending more. But, Mr. Speaker, that is the wrong way to go. Raising taxes will hurt this economy. Lower tax rates on American families will unleash the full potential of this economy.

We need to let American workers keep the reward for their hard work. We need to act this year to make the tax relief permanent. This will encourage long-term growth and allow families and small business owners to plan with confidence for the future.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR JANE NELSON

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Texas State Senator Jane Nelson on her recent receipt of the Nathan Davis Award for Outstanding Government Service from the American Medical Association.

Senator Nelson is a Republican who represents senate district 12 in Texas. She is my senator. She was elected to the Texas Senate in 1992 after serving two terms on the Texas State Board of Education. At the board of education, future Senator Nelson led her colleagues on a fight to correct over 5,000 errors in textbooks across the State of Texas.

During all of this activity, Senator Nelson has also managed to own and operate an aircraft component manufacturing firm with her husband Mike, while raising a son and four daughters, three of whom I delivered.

Senator Nelson has made health care policy and advocacy for Texas patients a top priority. She wrote Texas' first comprehensive privacy law, she fought for HMO reform, and wrote the law returning physical education classes to help fight childhood obesity.

In the most recent session of the State legislature, Senator Nelson worked for liability reform in the health care industry and for relief of rising health care costs. She also sponsored prompt pay legislation, which simply requires HMOs to pay their bills on time.

This is definitely a high honor for Senator Nelson, as it would be for any elected official. In the years to come, hopefully, the Nation will be honoring more great leaders such as Senator Nelson for their hard work and dedication to worthy causes as health care reform.

Senator Nelson, congratulations. I regard you as a friend and mentor, and,