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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

December 14, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK FOLEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

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

"O radiant Dayspring, Splendor of eternal light, come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death."

In today's world, we try to evade winter's darkness by touching a switch. Nevertheless, Lord, the modern world knows a darkness of mind and spirit that can match anything Stone or Bronze Age ancestors felt.

Technology's brilliance alone cannot lift the veil of darkness. Far too many of Your people, Lord, walk in the shadow of death or press on in a life without direction or meaning.

Come, Lord, and shed Your light upon this Nation and its leaders. Dif-fused within Your people, who are prepared to live transparent lives, You can remove the darkness of fear and anxiety with rays of hope, 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 Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota 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.

THE FREEDOM PATH

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, in less than 24 hours, the Iraqi people will elect a permanent parliament that will govern their free nation for the next 4 years. They will stand tall against tyranny and watch democracy unfold before their eyes. Mr. Speaker, I went to Iraq for the first historical elections in January and saw firsthand the birth of democracy in this land far, far away.

We will not cut and run on freedom and on Iraq. Otherwise, the terrorists will have won the day, and the Iraqi hope for freedom will disappear into the dismal abyss of lost causes. Freedom has a price. Our troops are paying that sacrificial price for the Iraqi people and world freedom. We will continue to support these sons and daughters of liberty. On the eve of the elections, we pay tribute to our freedom fighters.

President Kennedy once said, "The cost of freedom is always high, but Americans have always paid it, and one path we shall never choose and that is the path of surrender or submission."

Mr. Speaker, we have chosen the right path, the hard path, the freedom path. We will persevere with the free-

dom-loving people of Iraq until the journey down this path is successfully completed. That's just the way it is.

GENOCIDE IN DARFUR

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the last week of our work this session, there are 2 million people trapped in the unfolding nightmare in Darfur; 500 people a day being killed as we prepare for the holiday season. Since we are going to be delaying the work of the House until the end of January, this week is also the last chance for us to act to at least keep the African Union peacekeepers on the job; 7,300 people for an area the size of Texas seems like a fragile reed with which to stop the ongoing genocide in Darfur.

The Defense Appropriations train leaving the station could contain \$50 million, which would be the smallest of steps to halt what all of us here say we condemn. We all ought to ask ourselves what we are going to do about it this week.

CIADA—CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

(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 am honored today to salute an organization that has ably served the citizens of North and South Carolina for 50 years. With approximately 2,500 members, the Carolinas Independent Automobile Dealers Association is the largest chapter within the National Independent Dealers Association in the country. Led by executive director Jim Edwards, CIADA encourages its members to abide by a published code of ethics and to actively

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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serve the best interests of their clients. Their commitment to Carolina families has earned this association a reputation of excellence.

The members of this association have also been recognized as national leaders of the automobile industry. Throughout its history, four members of the Carolina Association have served as distinguished presidents of the National Association, including Karen Barbee of Concord, the current president and first woman to lead this national organization.

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

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG 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, here is a recap of the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit headlines and highlights: \$400 billion cost increases to \$800 billion, and not one drug was dispensed.

The program failed to lower the cost of prescription drugs. In fact, drug prices continue to outprice inflation.

The Web site explaining the program did not work and had the wrong information.

When the government sent out the wrong information on the program, they sent seniors the wrong information.

Just this morning, the New York Times reported on delays in processing applications for the new drug benefit. Because of these delays, seniors may not be getting the identification cards they need in time for the January 1st start date, meaning they might not be able to get their prescription drugs.

It is no wonder that President Bush called the benefit program perplexing. But what do you expect? This is the same crowd that mangled the response to Hurricane Katrina and bungled the early stages of the war in Iraq by sending too few troops without proper equipment. It seems the Republican Congress, with this President unchecked, could mess up a one-car parade. Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change and a new set of priorities.

IRAQI FREEDOM

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

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, today we are on the eve of Iraq's first election for a 4-year government based on their newly adopted constitution. We stand with the Iraqi people as they choose freedom and democracy over terrorism and oppression. In less than 3 years, they have gone from a brutal dictatorship to electing 275 representatives based on province and population, who will then select a prime minister, a

presidency cabinet, and a cabinet of ministers.

We congratulate the people of Iraq. We stand beside them, and we thank them for their courage, their bravery and their vision. However, we must acknowledge, as they do, that the path will not be easy, but they are truly a miracle in the journey they have undertaken. We are proud of their progress and hopeful for the future for Iraq, the Middle East and the defeat of terrorism around the world.

IRAQ HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH 9/11

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, 3,124 innocent civilians died in the 9/11 attacks at the World Trade Center, on the airliners and at the Pentagon; 2,151 U.S. soldiers have been killed in action; 15,881 U.S. soldiers have been wounded; 30,000 Iraqi civilian non-combatants, according to the White House, have been killed in Iraq; 500,000 tons of bombs have been dropped on Iraq by just one U.S. air wing. That is equivalent to 1 billion pounds of explosives, 2 million 500-pound bombs, nearly 400 pounds of explosives for every Iraqi man, woman, and child. Zero is the number of weapons of mass destruction found in Iraq. Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11.

VICTORIES IN IRAQ

(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, today we are here on the eve of the elections in Iraq, and it is a significant victory within itself. We congratulate our Iraqi friends on that victory.

Also, in Nashville, there is going to be plenty of purple to be seen because that is a voting site for Iraqis in America to gather and cast their vote. We have to congratulate the Kurdish population there on that victory.

I just returned from Memphis holding town halls speaking to a Rotary club. Our citizens understand this. This is a significant step. They are talking to our men and women from the 278th who have returned, families of the 101st who are currently deployed. They know progress is being made. The Army has just surpassed its projections; 5,800 new recruits have signed up because they are committed. They understand the vision. And to celebrate all of this achievement, Moveon.org is taking petitions to our district offices, calling for immediate withdrawal. They just do not understand the significance of today. We celebrate the success of the victories in Iraq.

HONORING THE 113TH ENGINEER BATTALION, INDIANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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

Mr. VISCIOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay tribute to the 113th Engineer Battalion of the Indiana National Guard and welcome them home after 1 year of serving our country heroically in Iraq.

Upon arrival, the 113th was nicknamed the "Ironman Battalion" because of their links to Northwest Indiana's steel industry. Throughout the past year, these ironmen and -women have shown a dedication and commitment to their country that is truly as strong as steel.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that soldiers of the 113th are coming home, coming home to be with their family and friends, coming home to be with their wives, husbands, sons, daughters, mothers and fathers.

The service of these men and women has not been without sacrifice. Over 40 Purple Hearts have been awarded to the 113th Battalion, each serving as a reminder of the danger our soldiers face every day.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome these soldiers home. I thank them for their service and sacrifice to our Nation, and I pledge that our support for them will remain equal to the sacrifice they have shown to our country.

SECURE OUR BORDERS

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

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, today we will be taking up the PATRIOT Act, the extension thereof, and it is important that we do so. It is important for the security of the country.

It is ironic in a way that, as we address this issue and as we debate whether or not we need this kind of internal security mechanism in order to make Americans feel better about themselves and in fact provide that security, there is some irony if the fact that the perimeters, our borders, are as porous as they are and as undefended as they are.

Tomorrow we will take up a bill that will hopefully begin to close those gaps also and begin to defend that perimeter, for without it having a PATRIOT Act is like putting a very expensive apparatus in your home to determine whether or not you have an invader inside the house while you are leaving your front and back doors wide open. That is the problem we have. Hopefully, it will be solved tomorrow with the bill we have before us, the Sensenbrenner bill, to begin the process of securing our border and securing our future.