



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2005

No. 5

House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m.

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

As we begin this regular session of the 109th Congress, the words of Deuteronomy demand our attention and spring into action the solemn oath sworn by Members of this Chamber to uphold the Constitution and serve God's people.

"Today you are making an agreement with the Lord: He is to be your God and you are to walk in His ways and observe His statutes, commandments and decrees, and to hearken to His voice.

"And today the Lord is making this agreement with you. You are to be a people especially His own, as He promised you; and provided you keep all His commandments, He will then raise you high in praise and renown and glory above all other nations He had made, and you will be a people sacred to the Lord your God."

Let the people say: Amen. 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 Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CUELLAR 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 25, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The 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 January 25, 2005 at 9:07 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. Res. 7.

Appointments:

Senate National Security Working Group;
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk of the House.

HONORING THE LAKEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

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

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of a talented group of young men and women from my hometown of Lakeville, Minnesota.

Over 300 members of the Lakeville High School Panther Band made all Minnesotans proud with their outstanding performance last week in the Presidential Inaugural Parade. The skill and enthusiasm demonstrated by these 10th- through 12th-graders reflected well upon their director, Nathan Earp, and the families, teachers and fellow students who support them.

As a neighbor and a fan of the Marching Panthers, I was proud to watch them go by, and I am proud to pay tribute to them today.

HONORING THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS OF JOSEPH A. SCOTT, JR.

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

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the outstanding contributions of Joseph A. Scott, Jr., and to acknowledge a scholarship fund in his name recognizing his exceptional years of service to the people of San Antonio.

Joe paved the way for others and became the first African American in San Antonio to become a licensed insurance agent. He then went on to found World Technical Services, providing jobs for the disabled and those conquering substance abuse. He most recently served as a cofounder of the New Covenant Baptist Church.

Joe has also played an integral role in San Antonio politics, working closely with former President Lyndon B. Johnson, former mayor and HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros and the late Congressman Frank Tejeda.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of Mr. Joseph A. Scott, Jr.

COMMENDING ERSKINE COLLEGE

(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 recognize Erskine College, the oldest 4-year, church-related college in South Carolina, which was founded by the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

For over 106 years, Erskine's faculty and staff have created an environment of excellence, where students are taught to incorporate their first-class education and good moral values into

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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their day-to-day lives as members of society.

Recently, the Erskine Seminary announced the opening of a new campus in partnership with the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, which my family has attended for six generations. As well, Erskine Seminary trains our U.S. Army Medcom Chaplains at Fort Sam Houston.

Finally, I would like to commend President John Carson, working with Board of Trustees Chairman John Moore, for his strong leadership and vision throughout his 7 years at Erskine. Because of President Carson's efforts, the school has reported record increases in enrollment for both the college and the seminary. When he steps down from his post in June, he can leave with the confidence that Erskine is better because of his service.

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

CONGRATULATING THE IRAQI PEOPLE ON HOLDING ELECTIONS JANUARY 30

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the upcoming Iraqi national elections on Saturday, January 30, and to congratulate the millions of brave Iraqi citizens who plan on voting in their first free election.

After suffering for decades under Saddam Hussein's brutal regime, the Iraqi people finally have an opportunity to form a representative government that truly reflects the will of the Iraqi nation. Despite ongoing pockets of violence in a few Iraqi cities, it is clear that millions of Iraqis will finally be able to shape their own futures by expressing and exercising their right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, this will truly be a national election that Iraq and the rest of the Middle East can and should be proud of. More than 14.3 million Iraqi citizens have registered to vote. More than 190 political parties will be on the ballot, encompassing almost 19,000 Iraqi citizens standing for election. Finally and most importantly, nearly 80 percent of Iraqis say that they will vote, even in the face of threatened violence from the terrorist insurgency.

Mr. Speaker, these are fantastic statistics.

THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY PRIVATIZATION ON WOMEN

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to represent the millions of American women who would be dispropor-

ately hurt by privatizing Social Security.

First of all, women on average earn less than men. Full-time working women still receive only 73 cents to every dollar earned by a man. This means that women count on Social Security's progressive benefits structure as their primary retirement income more than men.

Women make up about 60 percent of Social Security beneficiaries, and on average live 6 to 8 years longer, so their savings run out sooner.

In my district, there are more than 10,700 households headed by women who are the guardians of their families. The average income in my district is about \$41,000, and Social Security assures economic stability for women retirees. At the end of 2003, women's average monthly retirement benefit in my district was about \$798, and the men's average benefit was about \$1,039.

The gender disparities mean we must fight to protect women. Let us not call Social Security a crisis. Let us fix it so that everybody is treated equally and so that benefits are stabilized.

TROOP STRENGTH

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk for a minute about the importance of maintaining America's all-volunteer military in order to fight and win the global war on terror.

That military is very dependent on the integrated Armed Forces, our guardsmen and Reserves who are available to us at what I think should be times of crisis or need.

I would like to place before the House today six guidelines that I intend to use as we move forward toward looking at our decisions on military preparedness.

The first of those points is simply to maintain our commitment to a fully integrated force.

Number two, to challenge the administration to allocate resources in a manner that ensures that our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are well-equipped and well-funded.

Number three, achieve the right size of force.

Number four, establish the right mix of force.

Number five, retain the force by doing those things necessary for relieving the burden on soldiers and their families.

Number six, preserve the long-term dominance of America's fighting force.

Mr. Speaker, we have no greater responsibility than to provide for our national defense. The Founders of our government stated this very clearly in the Preamble to our Constitution. We must continue to maintain that constitutional commitment.

REBUILDING SOCIETY WITH TRUE RESPECT FOR WOMEN AND THE BEAUTIFUL GIFT OF LIFE

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

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday tens of thousands of people came to Washington to peacefully stand for life.

I am particularly encouraged, Mr. Speaker, by the multitudes of young people who came and who, despite a culture of death that rages around them, have courageously challenged the judgment of the Supreme Court, showing us that we can be a country of life-giving love, even for those in the most difficult situations.

These young people are saying that abortion is a fundamental injustice against women and their unborn children; that abortion has caused a deep wound in the soul of the country, resulting in untold grief and violence.

These young people are saying that women deserve better, especially those who may feel coerced into abortion. They are the compassionate voices for so many of us in need of healing.

Mr. Speaker, these young people have given me hope that we can rebuild our society with true respect for women and the beautiful gift of life.

HONORING MONSIGNOR IGNATIUS McDERMOTT

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, during the period when we were away, the Nation lost one of my favorite people, Father Ignatius McDermott, better known as Father Mac.

Father Mac was a Catholic priest who, when Chicago had an area known as Skid Row, used to walk among the men who were basically alcoholics, out of work, and would minister to them at night, and became known as the Skid Row Priest.

Later on he founded Haymarket Center, which has become one of the most effective substance abuse treatment centers in the country today. Father Mac worked right up to the moment when he gave his last measure of life.

Mr. Speaker, I commend him for his work and for his efforts. There are thousands who are living rejuvenated lives because of the work of Father Mac.

We thank you, Father Mac.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on