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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 21, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CANDICE S. MILLER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

Bishop Vicken Aykazian, The Armenian Church of America, offered the following prayer:

Lord God of creation, we ask Your blessing on the men and women gathered here today, all of whom labor in the cause of liberty and justice for the people of this great Nation.

We pray that You will inspire our leaders with wisdom, compassion, and resolution in the face of evil. In a time of uncertainty across our world, Lord, we seek above all to know and perform Your will. We pray that You will remember the precious sacrifices made in the name of liberty, that You will shepherd the downtrodden out of the darkness of tyranny, and that You will steer our entire world to a new dawn of peace and dignity, for all Your children.

We are aware, Lord, of the solemn occasion approaching us this week marking the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Even after four generations, the effects of that terrible episode are still felt. We ask You to grant rest to the souls of all whose lives were taken and bestow Your peace on their descendants.

Finally, Lord, we thank You for the bounty and liberty of this great coun-

try of America. Bless this land and her people, so that America may continue to be the great beacon of hope to our world.

For all of these blessings, may Your Name be praised from generation to generation. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. BERKLEY 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minute requests per side.

HONORING KENNETH SCHERMERHORN

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, on Monday, April 18, 2005, Tennessee lost legendary Nashville Symphony Orchestra conductor, Maestro Kenneth Schermerhorn. For more than 2 decades as music director and principal

conductor, he led the Nashville Symphony not only to national recognition but to international acclaim.

With astounding talent, Schermerhorn was not simply a metronome leading musicians through a musical score; rather, he gave life to the music he so clearly loved. He enriched the lives of thousands of adults and children in middle Tennessee, and he brought the joy of music to communities around the globe. He truly was a dear friend to so many Tennesseans and an inspirational leader to those of us who served on the symphony board.

It is with deep sorrow that I join music lovers in my State and in countries around the world to mourn the loss of our gifted friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

RISING GAS PRICES

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

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, gas prices are rising at alarming rates across the country, and these costs are hurting America's working families. The average price of a gallon of gas in Arkansas is \$2.11, up from \$1.72 just a year ago. That is a 22.6 percent increase. This high cost not only affects our overall economy but also directly impacts individual families, seniors, and farm families. Our farm families are facing higher overhead costs and family vacations are being canceled for many working families.

Americans deserve more. They deserve to know why the cost of gas is skyrocketing. More importantly, Americans deserve a solution. We must reduce our Nation's dependence on foreign oil.

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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H2397

FILIBUSTERS PART OF THE DEMOCRATS' CYNICAL CAMPAIGN OF OBSTRUCTION

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, Senate Democrats are blocking votes on qualified judicial nominees. Each of these nominees would receive the majority support of most Senators in a vote. So it was interesting when Democrats say exposing these obstructionist tactics is un-American, in the words of one Senator.

The fact is Democrats oppose these judges because they support judges who say the Ten Commandments, the Pledge, and prayer in public are illegal. They support judges who have no fear of legislating from the bench. They oppose judges who share the same values as most of America. But they do not want people to know that. They would rather keep that all under wraps.

But there is a growing voice in this country that is calling them out. Senate Democrats and their liberal allies at the ACLU and People for the American Way have declared people of faith ineligible to serve on the Federal bench. This strategy represents the worst that our Nation's leaders have to offer, using religious conviction as an excuse for obstructionism in the Senate. It is all part of a cynical campaign of obstructionism.

THE ENERGY POLICY ACT

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

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, now is the time to create an energy plan to wean this country from its reliance on foreign oil and to harness renewable energy sources. It is not the time to line the pockets of the special interests. This Congress should be developing a long-term energy policy that will make this Nation energy independent by utilizing 21st-century technology, not propping up obsolete energy sources guaranteed to continue this Nation's reliance on the oil, gas, and nuclear industries.

We should be putting our resources into the research and development of renewable energy, harness the sun, wind, geothermal. At a time when oil companies are reaping record profits, the Republican energy bill will give 93 percent of the subsidies in this bill to the oil, gas, and nuclear industries and chump change for research and development of renewable energy. It boggles my mind that at a time of record prices for gasoline, we are doing absolutely nothing in this bill to reduce gas prices. This debacle of a Republican bill will actually increase gas prices by 3 cents on the gallon.

I am appalled that we would spend one cent more on nuclear energy when

we have no solution to the nuclear waste problem. We continue to lavish billions of dollars on the nuclear industry when we have no safe way to store the waste. I hope that we defeat this ridiculous piece of legislation.

HOUSE ETHICS

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, yesterday the Democrat leadership in the House of Representatives rejected compromise to organize the House Ethics Committee. They rejected reasonable compromise because they want to use the ethics process for partisan political purposes. It is time to say enough is enough. The Democrat leadership must work with the Republican leadership so we can move this House forward. Reasonable Democrats on the other side of the aisle need to call off the dogs, need to say enough is enough with their Democrat whip and their Democrat leader and say, Come to the table. Let's organize. Let's move forward. Let's quit these baseless, partisan attacks on our Republican leader, TOM DELAY. Let's move forward. Let's move forward together as a House.

But, no, they reject that because they want to use the ethics process for partisan political gain. It is not about ethics to them. It is about partisanship. It is not about doing what is right. It is about using it for electoral gain, and it is not going to work. Enough is enough. Reasonable Democrats, come to the table. Let us work through this process and move this House forward.

HOUSE ETHICS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, since the beginning of the year, the House Republican leadership has worked to undermine the ethics process here in the House. First, the leadership floated an ethics proposal that would have allowed members of its leadership to continue to serve in leadership if they were indicted. Now under the weakened rules, the new chairman of the committee says he will conduct an investigation of one of the Republican leaders.

The American people should not be fooled. The leadership rushed through a new rule that ends ethics complaints after 45 days. And then the Republican leadership purged the committee of three members who were not always willing to toe the party line. And then they replaced them with party loyalists.

The Republican majority has weakened the ethics rules to the point that they are meaningless. The Republican leaders have gone to extreme lengths to protect one of their own. And now

they are trying to deceive the American people into believing that a real investigation would actually take place.

That is a farce.

PRAISING DAVID McMILLON'S ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to praise Bentonville High School senior David McMillon for his academic excellence.

When David was in the 10th grade, he scored a 35 on the ACT exam, just one point shy of a perfect score. That excellent score was 14 points higher than the national average. Now a senior, David took the test again, and this time managed to best his previous accomplishment by achieving a perfect score.

David was one of only 17 students who took the ACT last December to get a perfect score. It is quite an elite group when you consider that over 371,000 students across the country took this test last December. And David achieved this honor while serving as captain of the school's ACE team, earning the distinction of National Merit Finalist, and playing the lead in several Bentonville High School drama productions.

Madam Speaker, David McMillon should be praised for this accomplishment. This talented young Arkansan has a bright future ahead of him, and I congratulate him again on this accomplishment.

COSPONSOR THE GAS PRICE SPIKE ACT OF 2005

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, all over this country, the American people are troubled by the fast increasing price of gasoline. The oil companies are making billions of dollars in windfall profits while families have had to tighten their budget. While families have experienced less money for food, clothing, shelter and education, the oil companies continue to rake the American consumer over the coals. The fastest way to bring relief from these high prices is to eliminate the price gouging by the oil companies and reduce demand.

I have submitted a bill called the Gas Price Spike Act of 2005, which will discourage price gouging and reduce demand by implementing, first, a windfall profits tax on gasoline and diesel. Such a tax is to be imposed on key oil industry profits that are above a reasonable rate of return. If the oil companies are collecting excessive profits, they should be subject to a stiff tax on those excessive profits.

It is time to stand up for the American consumers and take on these oil companies.