

BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION IN
109TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, Republicans and Democrats alike in this House can take a great deal of pride in the work product that has come forward in the 109th Congress. We know that for 8 years there has been an attempt to pass bankruptcy reform legislation, to finally bring some common sense to our bankruptcy law. With a strong bipartisan vote, Democrats joining with Republicans, we finally have been able to bring about bankruptcy reform.

We know that frivolous lawsuits have been a tremendous problem, and class action reform is again another very important bipartisan victory that we have been able to bring about.

Securing our borders. Our national security is our number one priority in this country. It has to be constitutional, but securing our borders is very important. With a strong, bipartisan vote, we have been able to pass the Real ID legislation which has now been attached to the very supplemental appropriations bill which also enjoyed very strong bipartisan support.

The highway bill enjoyed strong bipartisan support with Democrats and Republicans coming together to work on this important issue.

We also know that trying to save small businesses and family farms has been very important, and that is why Democrats and Republicans came together to permanently repeal the death tax, one of the most onerous taxes of all, and we also know that dealing with the prospect of a horrible terrorist attack is something that we had not contemplated up until September 11, 2001. Now we have seriously considered the prospect of that by passing very important Continuity in Government legislation which enjoyed the support of 122 Democrats along with Republicans.

Mr. Speaker, just last week we saw 41 Democrats joined with Republicans to pass the very important energy legislation geared toward reducing the cost of gasoline which is one of the great challenges our constituents face.

We have enjoyed those strong bipartisan victories: bankruptcy, highway, continuity in government, border security, energy, and repeal of the death tax. These are very important bipartisan victories, but it is also important to note that we have had a very important bipartisan win just today, and it is because of the policies of President Bush and the United States Congress that we have been able to see the Syrians, after 3 long decades, finally extricate themselves from Lebanon.

I had the privilege of joining with a bipartisan delegation of my colleagues, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), the gentleman from Wash-

ington (Mr. HASTINGS), the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) join with us in going into Beirut, Lebanon. We had a chance to meet with young students who were great activists at Martyr's Square at the grave site of Rafik Hariri, the former Prime Minister who was tragically assassinated. These students said because of what the United States of America and the Coalition forces did in Iraq, laying the groundwork for 8.5 million people to vote on January 30, 2005, they were willing to stand up and free their country, and they were willing to die to ensure that the people of Lebanon would be free.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say while we have enjoyed a wide range of bipartisan victories in the 109th Congress under the very able leadership of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), it is also very important to note that under his leadership and the leadership of President Bush, we have been able to see democracy spread throughout the Middle East. It is exactly what President Bush said, and thank God we vigorously pursued that policy.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 58 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 at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Lord God, Well-spring of all creation and Provident Guide of our Nation's history, You bring us together for this session of the 109th Congress of the United States.

From diversity, You fashion one Nation. Out of the human search for truth and faulty efforts to lovingly accept one another in fellowship, You inspire consensus and settle a just yet temporary compromise. Grant to all patience and civility in every endeavor.

For You leave this work in such human hands, though You are the designer of lasting results.

Lord, without a transcendent framework, the movable pieces of this mosaic of government will not fall into place.

Alone and filled with fears and absolutes, all human effort to seek the common good will only lead to some artificial conformity or relative common denominator.

So again, our Nation turns to You in prayer, as we will do, now and forever. 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 New York (Mr. MCNULTY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MCNULTY 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 a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 893. An Act to make technical corrections in the Anabolic Steroid Control Act of 2004.

HEALTH INSURANCE PATIENT-
OWNERSHIP PLAN

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

Mr. Speaker, I am a third-generation physician. Both my father and grandfather were doctors, and I practiced medicine for over 20 years before coming to Congress. I can tell my colleagues that without a doubt, the doctor-patient relationship is far from what it used to be, or ought to be.

Today, our health care system is big business. The doctor-patient relationship is often obstructed by insurance companies, the government, and employers. The result is a system that prevents people from having control and ownership of critical health care decisions in their own lives.

Today, employers or the government most often determine what health insurance coverage a person receives, they dictate what the copays and the deductibles are, and they hold the contract with the insurance company.

I believe that the person most affected by health care decisions should be the one who has the most control over those decisions, and that is the patient.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we started thinking about health care in a new way. We should put health care choices in the patient's hands, not the employer's, not the insurance company's, and certainly not the government's. H. Res. 215, the Health Insurance Patient-Ownership Plan, is a good way to begin, and I ask my colleagues for their support on this new, exciting, and positive initiative.