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No. 65

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 17, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable LYNN A. WESTMORELAND to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

CENTRAL AMERICA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago, in late May, 2004 President Bush signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement, a trade agreement that extends the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, to 5 Central American countries and the Caribbean country of the Dominican Republic. That trade agreement, coupled with the President's next trade agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas,

will double the population of the North American Free Trade Agreement, double the size of NAFTA, and quadruple the number of low income workers, poverty wage workers that now live in NAFTA countries.

Normally, when a trade agreement is signed by President Bush, that trade agreement comes in front of Congress almost immediately. Since President Bush has taken office there have been 4, Morocco, Australia, Chile and Singapore. Each of those agreements has been voted on within about 2 months of the President's signature.

However, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, some call it the Central American Free Labor Agreement, because it really is all about low income workers, not about selling American products to Central America. The Central American Free Trade Agreement has not been sent to Congress; has not been voted on, even though President Bush signed it 11 and a half months ago, even longer ago than that actually, 11 months and 20 some days. And the reason is simple that it has not come in front of the Congress, because of the immense opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

As my colleagues will notice, our trade policy in this country simply is not working. If you look at what has happened to our trade deficit, that is the amount of exports that we sell to other countries versus the amount of imports we buy from other nations, you can see we had a negative flow in 1992, the year that I happened to run for Congress, of \$38 billion. That was the year before NAFTA.

NAFTA was passed in 1993. Then Congress passed a trade agreement with Chile, several other trade agreements. And you can see what has happened with this wrong-headed trade policy. This trade deficit, our trade deficit with the rest of the world was \$38 billion in 1992. Last year, 2004, our trade

deficit was \$620 billion, \$618 billion, precisely, from \$38 billion to \$618 billion.

By any stretch of the imagination, it is hard to argue that our trade policy is working. And that is why the opposition has been bipartisan to CAFTA, to the Central American Free Labor, the Central American Free Trade Agreement. That is why the opposition has been bipartisan. That is why the opposition has been overwhelming.

Last month 2 dozen Democrats and Republicans in Congress joined more than 150 business groups and labor organizations, sending the message, vote no on this Central American Free Trade Agreement. Last week more than 400 union workers and Members of Congress gathered in front of the U.S. Capitol again delivering that message, vote no on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Now, those of us opposed to CAFTA, which clearly is a majority in this Congress, or we already would have voted on it. Those of us opposed to CAFTA say we are not opposed to trade. We want to see fair trade agreements instead of free trade agreements, because we know what free trade agreements do. We know what this trade deficit does to our country. It means, according to the first President Bush, according to his economists, it means literally 12,000 lost jobs per \$1 billion of trade deficit. That means a million lost jobs. It means more than that. A million lost manufacturing jobs in this country.

In my State alone we have lost 200,000 manufacturing jobs, not entirely because of trade agreements, but that is a big component of it. So we know what these trade agreements do to individuals when they lose their jobs, what it does to family members when they lose their jobs, what it does to communities when a community has a plant closing, what it does to the school districts and the schools as they

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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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lose funding because these workers have lost their jobs and because this plant has closed, what it does to our country as a whole when we have this kind of trade deficit. We understand that. That is why those of us opposed to the Central American Free Trade Agreement want to throw out this dysfunctional cousin of NAFTA and want to negotiate a trade agreement that will lift workers up in Central America, while promoting prosperity here at home.

There is no reason that our trade agreements need to look like this, need to have a result like this. Instead, Congress can move forward in passing a fair trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the Majority Leader, the most powerful Republican in the U.S. Congress, and the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) both promised to vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement by the end of May.

Now, if you will look at this chart you will see that the end of May happens to be the 1-year anniversary of when CAFTA was sent to Congress. So, Mr. Speaker, we should vote no on the Central American Free Trade Agreement; bury this trade agreement, and pass a trade agreement that is good for American workers and American communities.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last year President Bush put Social Security reform on the national agenda. His proposal to save Social Security by giving younger Americans the choice to choose personal savings accounts has been met, to date, by ridicule and silence by the loyal opposition in this Congress. The ridicule has taken a variety of forms, denouncing the President's motives and intentions. The intentions of Republicans have been described by some outside organizations as an effort to tear down the house of public retirement in America.

Beyond that slur, there has just been, to date, simply silence. No ideas, no counterproposals, nothing to deal with what many refer to as a generational tsunami heading for Social Security, as some 40 million Americans over the age of 65 within 20 years will become 80 million Americans over the age of 65.

I say silence with hesitation, Mr. Speaker, because that actually ended yesterday among the loyal opposition when the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) introduced his legislation at a press event in his home State, where he unveiled a bill which he described as Social Security forever, saying, admirably, "I believe it is time for Democrats to offer an alternative to the President."

And to the gentleman from Florida, I say with admiration, I could not agree more. I admire him for his leadership on behalf of his vision of government and also his honesty as he proposes to cure what ails Social Security in the next 50 to 75 years with that anecdote that Democrats run to most often, and that is, namely, higher taxes. The Wexler bill, with a 6 percent tax increase on income over \$90,000 a year would be the largest marginal tax rate increase in a generation.

Let us be clear about this, Mr. Speaker. House conservatives will vigorously oppose any effort to finance Social Security reform by raising taxes on working families, small businesses, and family farms. Thanks to the Wexler proposal, the American people now see a very clear choice before them, the President and the Republican Congress's vision for reform and the single Democrat vision that has been articulated, higher taxes. With one of the largest marginal tax increases in a generation, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER's) Social Security forever bill looks more like higher taxes forever.

It is time for this Congress to move on to the substance of Social Security reform. Let us offer our conflicting visions in this chamber across the aisle and move forward to save and secure and reform Social Security for our children and our grandchildren.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 10 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord, Your word is founded in truth and Your just decrees are everlasting.

So our fleeting days and our passing tasks are truly significant only if they are grounded in You.

Eternal God, You are the wellspring of creativity for Your people. You are forever liberating us from blinding evil; so be with Congress today.

Ennoble every compromise rooted in compassion; and strengthen every commitment measured by righteous decisions in this body.

Just as there cannot be true worship in Your sight without sacrifice and conversion of heart; nor can there be true politics without principle. Free us,

Lord, to amend our ways so that we will search for what is truly right and just; lest we become lost in endless possibilities born only from self-centered imagination.

Lord God, in the land of the free we hold ourselves accountable to You both 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 gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. SOLIS 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.

SPEND IT WISELY

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

Mr. DELAY. Madam Speaker, this week the House will uphold, for the 216th time, its constitutionally mandated responsibility to begin the process of funding the Federal Government.

The Founding Fathers understood the power of the purse and that that power of the purse was government's most potent, and therefore installed that power first and foremost in the body most accountable to the American people, the House of Representatives.

In the 10 years Republicans have controlled the House appropriations process, we have fundamentally changed the way we spend the people's money.

We have based this process on an entirely new question: no longer "How much can we spend?" but "How much should we spend?" That may seem like a very small matter, but it has saved our government and our economy billions of dollars and millions of jobs over the last decade.

The fiscal accountability our Republican majority instituted helped balance the budget in the late 1990s, helped ensure the recession of 2001 was the shallowest in memory, and helped ensure our recovery from that recession and the 9/11 attacks was strong and durable.

This week we will begin our second decade protecting the American people's money, and our first year with our streamlined Committee on Appropriations, by taking up the first two spending bills for the 2006 fiscal year.

First, the homeland security spending bill will provide the resources our