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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,
May 25, 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

Father Val J. Peter, Executive Director, Girls and Boys Town USA, Boys Town, Nebraska, offered the following prayer:

Dear Lord, we come before You on this fine morning to ask Your blessings on this House. Give wisdom and humility to all Representatives in their work today. May they seek what will bring light and goodness to our country, to our world. May they achieve what is best for our people.

Let us each this day do one blessed thing for another person; ask pardon from another person. Bless and keep safe those who are in the service of our beloved country and bless especially our children, those who are hurt and suffering. Send people to put joy and happiness into their lives.

In this we pray in Your name. 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 gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KLINE 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.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO FATHER VAL J. PETER

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

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I have the honor of extending a warm welcome to Father Val J. Peter, our guest chaplain in the House of Representatives today. And I also want to thank him for his heartfelt moving prayer.

Father Val is a native Nebraskan and has been the fourth executive director for Girls and Boys Town USA, with 20 years of service to Girls and Boys Town. Father Peter is renowned as one of the principal supporters of youth in the world.

Father Peter once said, "We are like strong swimmers. When a child is floundering, we have a moral obligation to plunge in and help the child out of harm's way. Girls and Boys Town is not only to save children from harm but to make them whole again so they can become a strong, positive force that will touch other lives."

As the Bible's Book of Psalms, chapter 127, verses 3 through 5 says: "Behold, children are a blessing from the Lord. Like the arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them."

Father Val is undoubtedly one of the happiest and most devoted men I have ever had the privilege to meet. Father

Val Peter began his service to Girls and Boys Town in 1985. Twenty years later, as he now nears his retirement, the following words he wrote about Girls and Boys Town's ongoing work have never rung truer: "In the midst of apathy, we bring enthusiasm. In the midst of despair, we bring hope. In the midst of burdensome bureaucracies, we bring an entrepreneurial spirit. In the midst of violence, we bring the hope of peace." Father Val Peter has earned the gratitude of thousands of children and families across America.

Madam Speaker, I know I speak for my colleagues when I say we are honored to have Father Val Peter here with us today.

TIME FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

(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, why should a family risk losing everything they have worked a lifetime for because one of their family members gets sick? Right now, one of the major economic crises in this country is the lack of accessibility to affordable health care for the American people.

There are 45 million Americans without health insurance, and those who have health insurance are finding that their premiums, copays, and deductibles are putting a tremendous financial burden on their families. It is time for this Congress to come up with a solution.

There is a solution at hand. It is H.R. 676, a bill to establish Medicare for all. A universal, single payer, not-for-profit health care system, which takes the resources of our system and makes it possible for people to be covered for all medically necessary procedures: for vision care, for dental care, for mental health care, for long-term care, and a prescription drug benefit.

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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It is time that we recognize that the people of this country are suffering from a health care system which is not responsive to their needs. It is time for Medicare for all, universal single payer, not-for-profit health care, H.R. 676.

NATIONAL MISSING KIDS DAY

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

Mr. FOLEY. Madam Speaker, as co-chairman, along with the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CRAMER) of the Congressional Missing and Exploited Childrens Caucus, I rise today in order to recognize National Missing Kids Day.

The numbers are stunning. Every day over 2,000 children go missing. Even though many are returned home, there are still many who remain missing to this day. If not for the efforts of the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children, signed into law by President Reagan in 1983, and thanks to the hard work of John and Reve Walsh, and many of our Nation's law enforcement and colleagues here in Congress, I am afraid many more parents would be mourning the loss of their children.

Despite our success in recent years in tracking down our missing kids, much more needs to be done. Over the years, we have heard the names: Jessica Lunsford, Jetseta Gage, Sarah Michelle Lunde, Megan Kanka, Jacob Wetterling, and Adam Walsh, all of them beautiful children carrying with them some hopes and dreams of every young child in this country. All of these children taken away from their parents and killed by sex offenders.

There are over 500,000 registered sex offenders in this country, and 150,000 of them are missing. Now we hear that Medicare may be giving them Viagra. How disgusting. How sad. How sick. We have to stop playing Russian roulette with our children.

Last week, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CRAMER), my cochairman, and I, along with Senators Hatch and Biden, introduced the Sex Offender Registration Notification Act. I urge my colleagues in the House to work with the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) in passing this important bill.

CONSENSUS ON SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, yesterday the President said, "Those who obstruct reform, no matter what party they are, will pay a political price." Ironically, it is the President's insistence on privatization of Social Security that is slowing retirement reform. Privatization of Social Security has become the poison pill of progress.

We need to broaden the debate on privatizing Social Security into a discussion of retirement security. Democrats have ideas and proposals; our Republican friends have ideas and their proposals. We are not all that far apart. But before we can move forward, the privatization of Social Security has brought progress to a standstill.

Here are four ideas I have proposed: automatic enrollment in 401(k)s for all Americans; direct deposits of tax refunds into savings accounts; a government match of the first \$2,000 you save, matching it for 50 percent; and the universal 401(k) to simplify and consolidate the 16 different savings vehicles that exist.

Madam Speaker, make no mistake, this is the domestic issue of our time. We can choose to lead, or we can continue to debate the privatization plan the public has already rejected. Let us not allow the President to stand in the way of progress. The American people deserve a secure retirement.

PRESIDENT BUSH SUPPORTS RENEWABLE FUELS

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to applaud President Bush on his recent statements in support of renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel. While touring a biodiesel facility in Virginia last week, President Bush stated, "Our independence on foreign oil is like a foreign tax on the American Dream, and that tax keeps growing every year."

The President called on Americans to increase our use of renewable fuels and highlighted biodiesel as a fuel of the future. "You are beginning to see a new industry evolve," the President stated, "and as more Americans choose biodiesel over petroleum fuel, they can be proud knowing they are helping to make this country less dependent on foreign oil."

The energy bill that passed the House and is currently being debated in the Senate would increase our use of renewable fuels and reduce our reliance on foreign fuel. The President has called on Congress to get him that energy bill by the August break.

We need a national energy policy sooner rather than later, and a policy that strengthens and encourages the development and use of renewable fuels like biodiesel and ethanol.

HIDDEN ISSUE OF BASE CLOSURES

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, one item the House will not debate today in the Defense authorization is the hidden issue behind base closure: the Pentagon's inability and Congress'

unwillingness to have the military clean up after itself.

Incredibly, we are starting the fifth round of base closures when we have 17 bases and thousands of acres that remain from the 1988 round that have not been cleaned up. No wonder people are concerned about BRAC. This footdragging is bad for the environment, it is bad for local economies, and it gives the military a reputation for being a poor partner.

Congress should no longer be missing in action in this critical area, and it is time for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to stop trying to sidestep environmental responsibility and make sure that the military cleans up after itself. The public demands and deserve no less.

POLITICAL AGENDA OF DEMOCRATIC WATCHDOGS

(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, government watchdogs seem to be popular these days. They claim to keep an eye on politicians to keep them honest. Political Money Line is gathering data that is available to the public on who is paying for congressional travel. That is a watchdog. It puts the truth out for the public and sounds a warning when there is a problem.

However, other so-called watchdogs are not watching out for the public; they are promoting their own political agenda. They are partisans. Four of the big ones, Citizens For Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Common Cause, Public Citizen, and Campaign Legal Center all have deeply embedded partisan ties with the Democrats. Together, they have hired Democrat staffers and former Democrat public officials, and they have contributed millions to Democrats in elections. Together, they have launched an attack on their partisan rivals and their number one enemy, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

They do not care about the public. They care about power. They want it back. This has nothing to do with watching out for the public, but everything to do with partisans deceiving the American people and trying to change the party in power.

WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

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

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the courage and commitment of women who have served and continue to serve in defense of our Nation. Today, we will be voting on an appropriations bill to limit and restrict women in the military. How ironic.

Tomorrow, women Members of Congress, from this Congress, will be attending the eighth annual Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues'