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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 20, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF FORTENBERRY 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 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

CANADA SUPREME COURT STRIKES BAN ON HEALTH INSURANCE PRIVATE

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the Supreme Court overturned a law that prevented people from buying health insurance, that is, private health insurance, to pay for medical services available from and through Medicare, the publicly funded system. The ruling means that citizen residents can pay privately for medical service, even if the services are already covered under the state-provided health care system.

Now, what does that mean? Perhaps you did not see this ruling, but that is because it was not the United States Supreme Court and Medicare and "private contract" we are talking about. It was the Canadian Supreme Court and Canada's socialized health care program under Medicare and Quebec's ban.

Now, how did this come about? Well, a courageous Canadian doctor, Jacques Chaoulli, and his patient, 70-year-old Montreal businessman, George Zeliotis, waited for a hip surgery replacement, decided enough is enough, and challenged the constitutionality of the Canadian ban on private payment. He argued that long waiting lines and times for surgery contradicted the country's constitutional guarantee of "life, liberty and the security of the person." He argued that the wait was unreasonable, endangered his life, and infringed on his constitutional rights.

The Court split 3-3 over whether the ban on private insurance violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, something like our Bill of Rights, but agreed in striking the ban, saying that, "Access to a waiting list is not access to health care", in its ruling. They went on further to say, "The evidence in this case shows that delays in the public health care system are widespread, and that, in some serious cases, patients die as a result of waiting lists for public health care. The evidence also demonstrates that the prohibition against private health insurance and its consequences of denying people vital health care results in physical and psychological suffering that meets a threshold test of seriousness."

Now, my colleagues, while the ruling applies only to the province of Quebec, one wonders if this could fundamentally change the way health care is delivered across that country. Canada is currently the only major industrialized country in the world that does not allow any private administration of

health care services that are provided by the public system.

Now, John Williamson, President of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation said with hope, "This is a breach in government monopoly health care in this country". That is in Canada. "It is going to open up litigation across the country and the other nine provinces as taxpayers there press for their same right, which is the right to seek and buy insurance to cover private health care."

And some Canadians worry that this is the beginning of the end of what they considered a national treasure. Well, this is not cause for alarm, or by those who have for years argued for our Medicare private contract ban here in the United States, it simply is not a threat, said the Court. "It cannot be concluded from the evidence concerning the Quebec plan or the plans of the other provinces of Canada, or from the evolution of the systems of various OECD countries, that an absolute prohibition on private insurance is necessary to protect the integrity of the public plan."

And I would argue, my colleagues, in fact, it is the Canadian middle class who have probably been most injured, not the very, very wealthy, because they just pay out of pocket. They can afford it. Remember that the ban is on private insurance, not private health care, so the very rich could still go on and get out of this waiting line that the rest of the middle class have to continue to participate in.

And furthermore, a whole industry of medical tourism was spawned. For decades Canadians of means have been traveling to the premiere medical facilities here in the United States, especially in my sunny locales in the State of Florida to enjoy lovely weather, while they are also getting the benefits of health care facilities in Florida.

This means that the Court, the Canadian Court, sees that a national comprehensive coverage program can

☐ 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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peacefully coexist with private health insurance. My colleagues, we have been saying that in the United States for years.

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 36 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 by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Stan Scroggins, Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church, Magnolia, Arkansas, offered the following prayer:

O God, we thank You for blessing this Nation. Help us not to forget that with Your blessing comes our responsibility to bless the peoples of the Earth.

We confess our need for Your guidance. Extend Your mercy and love, forgive us of our self-seeking ways, and make us into a Nation after Your own heart.

We recognize that these are challenging days, and the decisions made by this House will have profound effect on our Nation and the world. Help every Representative to seek wisdom from You with every decision to be made.

Deliver us from our enemies, grant protection to our citizens, and forever allow this Nation to be a beacon of freedom and peace so that Your name will forever be honored on the Earth.

Hear our prayer, O God, and continue to bless America, we pray. 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 gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida 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.

IDENTITY THEFT

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, every year more than 3 million Americans have their identities stolen. That is one every 10 seconds. These incredible statistics show that identity theft both online and offline is not slowing down. Just this past week we learned of another incident where up to 40 million identities were compromised.

The last Congress overwhelmingly approved legislation known as the FACT Act, and President Bush signed it into law. It helps you to protect your identity by providing a free credit report every year, requiring creditors who lent money in your name to a thief to help you clear your name, and creating a single place where a fraud alert can be put on your credit history and honored all across America.

Congress has taken steps to strengthen identity theft laws, but the bad guys are still out there, and commonsense precautions are the key to help Americans from becoming victims.

Mr. Speaker, people do not give the keys to their house to complete strangers, and that same lesson applies to identity theft. I urge all Americans to guard the keys to their identity as we in Congress continue to find aggressive solutions.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, depending on whom you listen to, the insurgents in Iraq are either in their last throes or they are growing in size and strength. But both the administration and critics seem to agree that the U.S. military will be deployed to Iraq for a long time to come. It is our quagmire.

Every day our forces wake up in Iraq, more die and are wounded, and more families on the home front are strained and suffer losses. At some terrible point in the future, the Nation's leaders will say, Enough is enough. Whether the number of casualties at that point will be 5,000 or 10,000 or 50,000, I do not know. Whether the cost at that point will be \$250 billion, \$350 billion, or \$500 billion, I do not know. At some point, the terrible arithmetic of the war will add up to overwhelm everybody.

But this war can end another way. It can end if enough Members of Congress consider and cosponsor House Joint Resolution 55, a bipartisan bill introduced last week to require the President to initiate troop withdrawal no later than October 1, 2006. Thank the troops, and bring them home.

JUNETEENTH

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are many times that

this Nation has celebrated its freedom. One that comes to mind is the celebration after the Revolutionary War, then the celebration after Abraham Lincoln pronounced the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. But today I rise to celebrate Juneteenth, a holiday that is now celebrated across the Nation, but Texans and Louisianans know it well, for because the Union soldiers were too busy, the slaves in Texas, some 200,000, did not know of emancipation until 1865.

When General Granger landed in Galveston, he read the words, "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a proclamation from the executive of the United States, all slaves are free." And so this weekend on June 19, across the State of Texas and Louisiana and around the Nation, we celebrated freedom. We sang, we spoke about freedom and the preciousness of it. We thanked America for its values and belief in freedom.

I would like to thank State Representative Al Edwards, a Texan and a constituent of my congressional district, who is known as the Father of Juneteenth. It is important to honor freedom wherever it is found.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO BOARD OF VISITORS TO UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 9355(a), amended by Public Law 108-375, and the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Air Force Academy:

Ms. KILPATRICK, Michigan.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM, Member of Congress:

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 16, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a subpoena, issued by the Superior Court for Imperial County, California, for documents.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the precedent and privileges of the House.

Sincerely,

RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM,
Member of Congress.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in