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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Anthony Marciano, Executive Director, Charlotte Rescue Mission, Charlotte, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

I come as a Christian and invite you in your own faith to pray with me now.

God our Father,

We come before You with passionate hearts and minds for the people we represent and this land we love.

I ask You to bless these Representatives. You know their heart for their constituency, their hope for this country and prayer for peace in our world. You have witnessed the agony they feel when decisions are made and votes are cast in the best interest of this country. Let their vote be with integrity, even if it means being misunderstood for the position they have taken on the matter at hand.

I ask Your blessing, not for their honor, but on this land You have entrusted to their care. When their term is finished and they no longer darken these hallowed halls, may America remember their character, demonstrated by the decisions they will have made.

Give them Your wisdom, and discernment that they may demonstrate Your love.

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.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia 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 Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3761. An act to provide special rules for disaster relief employment under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for individuals displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

The message also announced that the Senate agreed to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the text of the bill (H.R. 3768) "An act to provide emergency tax relief for persons affected by Hurricane Katrina".

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 98-183, as amended by Public Law 103-419, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore and upon the recommendation of the Democratic Leader, appoints Arlan D. Melendez, of Nevada, to the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain five 1-minutes on each side.

MATERNAL SMOKING

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, smoking during pregnancy is associated with low birth weight in babies, preterm births, and perinatal deaths.

Low birth weight babies often suffer complications such as underdeveloped lungs and require special care and longer hospital stays that can cost up to \$2 billion annually in increased health care costs. As the children grow up, they are at increased risk for other health problems throughout their young lives.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that if pregnant women on Medicaid receive counseling that reduces smoking, millions and perhaps billions in excess Medicaid health care costs could be avoided. This extends widely as we cover other areas to help reduce smoking.

Congress needs to continue to provide health care organizations with data on the cost effectiveness of cessation services to encourage private plans and government-funded plans to cover smoking cessation. By reducing maternal smoking during pregnancy, we can save not just one but two lives at a time.

I urge my colleagues to visit my Web site at murphy.house.gov to learn about more ways to save lives and to save money by reducing health care costs.

TAKE CARE OF AMERICANS

(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, America must begin to take care of things here at home, to protect the people from hurricanes and floods, to protect

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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the people from the oil and gas monopolies. America must begin to take care of things at home to protect Social Security from privatization, to have the wealthy pay a fair share of the taxes. America must begin to take care of things at home, to have an exit strategy from Iraq to bring our troops home. America must begin to take care of things at home to rebuild the gulf coast, to rebuild the American economy, to rebuild hope in the future, to end fear and uncertainty.

Who will protect the American people if we do not? We will assure and must assure their education, jobs, living wages, health care, and retirement security. If we do not, who will?

IRAQIS TAKING CHARGE OF THEIR OWN NATION

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, Iraqis are not yet fully capable of defending themselves against the terrorists. But they are getting much closer.

In Tal Afar 5,000 Iraqis led 3,800 Americans in taking back the town from terrorists. The force killed 157 terrorists, captured 440, seized 34 weapons caches. The victory is a watershed moment in the war against terror. It was the largest urban offensive in Iraq since Americans led the Fallujah offensive last year. It is proof that with proper training Iraqis can do it better than us.

In Fallujah, the Americans withdrew and the terrorists reappeared. In Tal Afar, though, Iraqis are weeding out the terrorists and seeding the town with security forces. This will become the model for future operations in towns like Ramadi. Upcoming elections and the permanent establishment of the Iraqi constitution will lend legitimacy to this young democracy and move them closer to victory. Another ally in the cause of freedom.

FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, despite our recent flood insurance reforms, Katrina revealed that much remains to be done. Damage on a massive scale triggered payouts and borrowing that mean the program must be revised, including a significant one-time-only subsidy. We should reconsider who must be covered and how the insurance premiums will be paid as well as the tricky question of flood versus wind damage. And certainly more attention must be given to the role and responsibilities of communities to make their citizens safer. It is very likely that some of the weakest regulatory protections in the Nation contributed to the Katrina devastation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this critical effort to fix the flood in-

surance program today and reform it for the future.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, fiscal responsibility is one of those tenets of our Republican philosophy. It is something our constituents remind us of every day. A constituent called yesterday following our Operation Offset press conference. She liked what she saw. Her advice was an old adage from her granny: Mind your pennies and your dollars will mind themselves.

I said, No, we're minding your pennies, the taxpayers' pennies, their dollars. This is their money. It is not government's money. We need to remember that.

Mr. Speaker, this House under our Republican leadership has passed a 2006 budget that worked to reduce discretionary spending. It is a great step in beginning to rein in the growth of government. I commend them for that. This House has passed tax relief that has led to 3 million new jobs being created. We need to keep that. I want to thank the leadership for that good work and to thank them for encouraging every Member of this body to work with them to find a way for us to address the needs that our Nation has in response to Hurricane Katrina. I want to thank Republican Study Committee Chairman PENCE for his good work on Operation Offset in providing us with another opportunity to reaffirm that we are the party of fiscal responsibility.

KATRINA AND IRAQ COSTS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, the double standard in this Congress takes your breath away. In the 2½ years since I have been in Congress, this body has allocated nearly \$400 billion for Iraq without a worry about the deficit. You have funded three wars with four tax cuts and added \$3 trillion to the Nation's debt. Yet when this Congress is facing a tab for rebuilding the lives of Americans that is roughly half of what we have spent in the Iraqi war, suddenly everybody is a deficit hawk in this institution.

In Iraq we have spent millions to rebuild the Sweet Water Canal system, including the repair of the levee system. But here in America we cut levee construction and repair for Louisiana by 80 percent. When it comes to rebuilding Iraq, this Congress writes hot checks. Rebuilding America? You want to cut education and health care. Your inconsistency is breathtaking, especially when America draws the short stick. When it comes to rebuilding in the gulf coast, you are turning yourself

into pretzels, all to protect tax cuts for the wealthy.

But rebuilding Iraq should not come at the expense of America's future. Everyone must have skin in the game when it comes to meeting our challenges. Freedom is not free. This Congress cannot have one set of books and one set of priorities for Iraq and another for the American people and their future.

LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as a third generation physician, I have seen health care in our Nation change in the most dynamic of ways. Advances in medicine and technology have improved the lives of millions of people. Today, however, the doctor-patient relationship that is so critical in providing quality health care is being exploited. It is no wonder that four out of every five Americans are wary of frivolous lawsuits in health care. Insurance companies, personal injury trial lawyers and even the potential of a lawsuit are leading hospitals to close their doors and doctors to stop practicing faster than ever before.

Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week begins on October 3, not a moment too soon. Health care decisions must and should be made in the clinic and the operating room, not the courtroom. Decisions should be in the best interests of patients, not in the best interests of the pocketbooks of personal injury lawyers. I have seen it happen myself, with doctors making medical decisions out of fear of lawsuits, not from what they learned in medical school. That is not why they devoted their lives to medicine. Their only desire is to help heal people, not worry about whether their diagnosis would be put on trial.

HONORING MANUEL ESQUEDA

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Manuel Esqueda, a retired banker who over his lifetime helped send nearly 2,000 Latino students to college, many of whom were the first in their families to go.

Manuel's dedication to his community and education came from his deep-seated connection to the Delhi neighborhood of Santa Ana, California, where he grew up and where his family was able to buy a home when other Mexican Americans were unable to do so. He was active in the development of the Delhi Community Center, which is now a centerpiece of that neighborhood.

In honor of his community service, the Manuel Esqueda Elementary