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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

THE SPEAKER'S ROOMS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 2, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RAY LAHOOD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

The Reverend James T. Akers, National Chaplain, The American Legion, offered the following prayer:

Our Heavenly Father, in this moment of petition, when our minds and hearts are silent before You, may the prayers of Thy servants in this Chamber be heard.

In the midst of great activity today, make this moment sacred, a moment when answers come and guidance is given. Create in us the grace of thankful hearts, the grace of boldness in standing for what is right, the grace to treat others as we would be treated, and, finally, the grace to be thankful for all that we have and enjoy.

Grant us now a vivid sense of Your being by our side and make us Your partners in seeking wisdom for all matters of State. Give to these leaders of our Nation the inspired plans that shall lead this country in making the American Dream come true for all our citizens.

All of this we lift up to Your Holy Will and ask it in Your Holy 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 his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CUELLAR 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 OF THE REVEREND JAMES T. AKERS AS GUEST CHAPLAIN

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to introduce to my colleagues here in the House the Reverend James T. Akers of Madison, Kansas. Reverend Akers currently serves as the chaplain of the American Legion, and is an ordained priest with the Anglican Orthodox Church in Madison.

Reverend Akers answered the call to the Lord's service when he left public school administration and entered the clergy. He has served his church and has focused his efforts on his colleagues, his comrades, and the American Legion as he tries to meet the spiritual needs of veterans and their families. Since 1992 this chaplain has been the chaplain at Ball-McComb American Legion post in Emporia, Kansas, and has been the American Legion district chaplain twice and for the past 7 years has been the Department of Kansas chaplain. We are honored in

Kansas to have him now as the National American Legion chaplain. He is a U.S. Army veteran himself, who fought in the Korean War, and Reverend Akers is not only involved in the American Legion and service to other veterans, but he is also a member of the Disabled American Veterans, the Reserve Officers Association of the United States, and is a Companion of the Military Order of World Wars.

I have known Reverend Akers for a long time now. We often meet people in life who make a tremendous difference just on meeting them. He is a warm and caring and compassionate person who loves his fellow man, and it is a real honor to have him today as our guest chaplain in the United States House of Representatives.

THE REAL "SURVIVORS" OF PALAU

(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, Reality TV is very popular these days. "Survivor" was the first of these shows to really break through. This season "Survivor" is being filmed on the island of Palau.

A reader, Major Jerry Wiffler, pointed out to nationalreview.com that this island was also the site of an important battle in 1944. On September 15, 1944, the 1st Marine Division landed on the beaches of Palau in order to protect MacArthur's right flank as he tried to recapture the Philippines. The battle was ferocious, as were most of these island engagements in the South Pacific. Ten thousand and five hundred Japanese troops fought for nearly a month before the Marines were able to secure the island, and during this battle, Major Wiffler recalls, eight Marines earned the Medal of honor for their actions.

Today the island is best known as the setting for a "reality" TV show that

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

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pits people against each other for prize money. Sixty years ago, the island was the site of great bravery and courage, not for the sake of prize money, but for the sake of our Nation and for freedom.

Major Wiffler hoped we would remember this.

SOCIAL SECURITY TOWN HALL MEETINGS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this Friday, President Bush plans to take his traveling White House to New Jersey in the hope of convincing New Jersey workers to support his Social Security privatization proposal. I only wish the President would open his event up to New Jerseyans who did not contribute huge amounts to his reelection campaign or who refused to sign a letter saying they are a card-carrying Republican. Maybe then he would hear the public's real concerns about his privatization plan.

Mr. Speaker, the American people simply do not believe the President wants to strengthen Social Security. President Bush keeps on talking about a crisis, but he has even admitted that his own privatization plan does nothing to fix the problems Social Security faces 40 years from now. Instead of fixing a future problem, the President's privatization plan actually jeopardizes the future of Social Security by moving insolvency forward from 2052 to 2031, meaning we would face a real crisis much sooner under the President's plan.

I welcome the President's visit. For 6 weeks, he has been working to build support for his plan, but it has fallen flat with the American people and it will also fall flat in New Jersey.

JOHN LEWIS'S 65TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), who celebrated his 65th birthday last week. It was appropriate that the gentleman from Georgia's (Mr. LEWIS) birthday fell during Black History Month because his involvement in politics began when he was a student activist working to spread the message of nonviolence preached by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) was later involved in some of the most important civil rights events in our Nation's history: The Freedom Rides, the Selma March, and countless other gatherings that helped this country end the era of segregation and move toward an equal and a just society.

Even today, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is known for his dedication and persistence. Although we sit on opposite sides of the aisle, I

am often inspired by his passion and determination on issues of importance to his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the Members join me in congratulating the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

SOCIAL SECURITY IN THE 32ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to inform President Bush about what my constituents in the San Gabriel Valley and East Los Angeles are saying about Social Security.

In my district where there are nearly 60,000 Social Security beneficiaries, people are very concerned about the risky privatization scheme. To date, my office has held 15 senior center visits, high school visits, parent center visits, and health care facility visits. Over 500 constituents have been contacted about this issue. My constituents at Club America and the Federation of Seniors, whose members reside in east Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley, are overwhelmingly opposed to privatizing Social Security. I have received well over 300 letters in the past 2 weeks from people who are very worried about their benefits. In fact, Mr. Raymundo Romero from Los Angeles says: "President Bush is claiming a mandate to privatize Social Security. I'm writing to tell you that he has no mandate from me, or from most other Americans, to cut Social Security benefits or add to America's financial burdens in order to reward Wall Street backers with risky private accounts." And I have about 300 letters that say about the same thing.

So I urge our Members of Congress to reject privatization.

THE NATIONAL BUDGET

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, the Good Book tells us to know the condition of our flocks and keep careful watch over our herds, for riches do not endure forever.

Tomorrow the budget debate begins here on Capitol Hill as the Committee on the Budget begins the process of writing our Federal budget, and President Bush has sent to Capitol Hill a strong conservative budget that represents a good start as we head down the road to fiscal discipline.

But as the debate begins, let us also insist that we change the way we spend the people's money. Observers of Congress know that it is not bad people who spend the people's money, it is a bad process that has not been fundamentally reformed since 1972. Only through fundamental budget process

reform and a budget that represents fiscal discipline will we begin again to restore fiscal discipline to the national budget.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later today.

CONGRATULATING ASME ON THEIR 125TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 13) congratulating ASME on their 125th anniversary, celebrating the achievements of ASME members, and expressing the gratitude of the American people for ASME's contributions.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 13

Whereas in 2005, ASME, incorporated in 1880 as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, celebrates its 125th anniversary as one of the premier professional organizations focused on technical, educational, and research issues of the engineering community;

Whereas ASME plays a key role in protecting the welfare and safety of the public through the development and promulgation of over 600 codes and standards, including codes governing the manufacture of boilers, pressure vessels, elevators, escalators, petroleum and hazardous liquid pipelines, cranes, forklifts, power tools, screw threads and fasteners, and many other products routinely used by industry and people in the United States and around the world;

Whereas ASME, through its 120,000 members, works diligently to ensure the provision of quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education for young people as a way to foster and encourage the advancement of technology;

Whereas industrial pioneers and ASME members such as Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and George Westinghouse helped to build ASME's engineering society even as ASME was helping to build the economy of the United States;

Whereas ASME members help to ensure the development and operation of quality and technologically advanced transportation systems, including automobile, rail, and air travel;

Whereas ASME members contribute to research and development that identifies emerging and future technical needs in evolving and multidisciplinary areas;

Whereas ASME continues to provide quality continuing education programs designed to keep engineers at the cutting edge of technology; and

Whereas in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, ASME members have intensified efforts to develop technologies for homeland security and the protection of the critical assets of this Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Congress—