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No. 36

House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 28, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J.H. "JOE" SCHWARZ to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:
Our God and Savior, You are eternal love, and all peoples are embraced by Your spirit. Show Your love to this Congress, shower Your wisdom upon all who work in public office for the good of Your people to build a just society.

Draw us closer into Your love and peace. Teach us to follow Your ways, that we may become capable of true love ourselves and be a fountain of living water in the midst of a thirsting world.

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 Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. BLACKBURN 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2006.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 17, 2006, at 9:30 a.m.:

That the Senate concur on House amendment to the bill S. 2275.

That the Senate passed S. 166.

That the Senate passed S. 1608.

That the Senate passed S. 2447.

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 350.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4826.

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 361.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

DEMOCRATIC SECURITY PLAN

(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, Roll Call reports that the Democrats are going to unveil an "ambitious security plan" tomorrow.

Well, bless their hearts. If they have not noticed, those of us on this side of

the aisle have been focused on the issue and passing security legislation for more than 5 years now.

President Bush has made national security his priority mission. House Republicans have been talking about it for months. We have been working with our leadership on it. They consider national security priority number one, not a political tactic to trot out 7 months before an election.

We passed the PATRIOT Act to target terrorists. The Democrats voted against it. We passed the REAL ID Act to make it harder for potential terrorists to use valid State-issued identification documents. They opposed that.

We are pushing a border security bill to strengthen our border control, and Democrats in the Senate are threatening a filibuster. Mr. Speaker, Americans are going to see right through their last-ditch effort to look engaged on security.

EXTEND THE MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN DEADLINE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, as this calendar shows, the countdown continues to an outrageous tax congressional Republicans and the Bush administration plan to inflict on American seniors.

If Washington does not act before May 15, millions of seniors who have yet to choose a prescription drug plan will face a 1 percent tax that will be added onto their drug premiums for every month that they wait to sign up.

So if a senior, for example, does not choose to sign up for a plan until September, that senior would be forced to pay a 5 percent tax on top of their monthly premium every single month for the rest of their lives.

□ 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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President Bush has already admitted that his prescription drug plan is complicated and confusing, and yet the President refuses to give seniors more time to sign up for a drug plan without facing a penalty. If the President refuses to act, Congress must step in.

Congressional Democrats want to extend the deadline until the end of the year, giving seniors 7 additional months to navigate the complexities of the plan.

As we mark off another day on the calendar, Mr. Speaker, time is running out for congressional Republicans to join us in supporting this extension. America's seniors cannot afford a Bush prescription drug tax.

TRIBUTE TO BUCK, SCOUT WAR DOG

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, during the President's State of the Union address, a military working dog was among the honored guests, sharing box seats with First Lady Laura Bush.

While serving alongside a soldier in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, this dog searched for explosives and saved the lives of many American soldiers. Since World War II, dogs have served and protected our troops on nearly every battlefield, and today they help detect terrorists in the global war on terrorism.

For many years, Johnny Mayo and his dog, Buck, of Lexington, South Carolina, worked tirelessly to promote the dedication of America's military war dogs.

An inspiration for the book, "Buck's Heroes," Buck, a 15-year-old Siberian Husky, touched the lives of many people throughout our Nation. Last Thursday, Buck passed away at home. Today I am honored to recognize his unique service for all American military dogs, which is especially needed in the war on terrorism.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

IMMIGRATION AND THE LOS ANGELES RALLY

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, as a proud daughter of immigrants, I rise today to echo the message of immigrant families across America in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

This past weekend, I took part in the largest demonstration that has ever taken place in California, in the area of Los Angeles, since the Vietnam War. Half a million people, if not a million, marched peacefully to let the Senate know that an enforcement-only border protection approach will not solve our broken immigration system. Nearly

40,000 students across Southern California and some from my district even marched to defend human rights and immigration reform.

I urge them to return to their classrooms and empower themselves through education to make a difference in their future. President Bush said, "Immigration is an important topic. We need to maintain our perspective. At its core immigration is a sign of a confident and successful Nation."

Our Nation needs laws that protect our borders, embrace our families, and provide earned legalization for law-abiding immigrants. Immigrant families are an important part of our social fabric and economy. Our Nation should not turn its back and ignore their needs.

THE NEW YORK TIMES GOT IT RIGHT

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I never thought I would stand on our House floor and say the words I am about to say, but here goes: the New York Times got it right.

Yes, you heard me correctly. Over the weekend, the New York Times ran an article touting the success of the new Medicare prescription drug program with the headlines: "For some who solve the puzzle, Medicare drug plan pays off."

It is about time that the mainstream media started reporting on the success of the Medicare program. For months Republicans have been holding town halls and coming to this floor to discuss how this historic program is helping America's seniors save money on their prescription drugs.

But the media and Democrats have turned a blind eye. They have ignored folks such as Virginia Shores who thought she heard her pharmacist wrong when he told her that with her new Medicare prescription drug card the cost of her prescriptions was only \$50, down from \$250.

Well, I suppose every once in a blue moon the mainstream media gets something right. Perhaps now is the time for Democrats to take time off from their demagoguery and actually listen to seniors.

It is amazing what you can learn. Just look at the New York Times.

THE SENATE NEEDS TO PASS THE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my thoughts on our Nation's need for passing the comprehensive Water Resources Development Act by this Congress.

On July 14 of last year, H.R. 2864, the Water Resources Development Act, passed here in this House by a resounding 406-14. The measures authorized major flood control, navigation, environmental restoration, and other water resource projects.

Yet once again, similar to years past, this vital legislation has become bogged down by our colleagues in the other body. It is critical that we return to a 2-year cycle to provide continuity for vital water-related infrastructure. Infrastructure investment has been and will continue to be the bedrock foundation of our economic growth and public safety.

A water resource bill is critical to the protection of our environment and the public safety, and the Nation needs this one right now.

MEDICARE PART D IS WORKING

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about the good news that is spreading across the country. Medicare part D is working. Seniors are signing up for a drug benefit through Medicare for the very first time.

According to recent studies, seniors could save as much as \$1,100 annually. This is real savings for our senior population. Over 27 million Medicare-eligible beneficiaries now have drug coverage, a 25 percent increase from February, a 25 percent increase in 1 month.

Medicare's initial goal for the first year of enrollment was between 28 and 30 million beneficiaries, and they are well on their way there. In my home State of West Virginia, over 226,000 beneficiaries now have coverage, a 6 percent increase just in the month of February.

72,000 of those live in my district. This is real success. I sat next to John the other day at a dinner. He informed me with his new Medicare prescription drug coverage he is going to save \$4,000 this year.

This is good news. There is much more work to be done. We must pull together to work with our constituents to find the best plans for their individual situations.

A TALE OF TWO YALE SPIES

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Yale University proudly boasts it has among its students a so-called former Taliban leader. The Taliban promotes treating women like property, intolerance for religious diversity, hate for freedom, and death to America.

Has Yale let a Taliban spy into its midst? Has elitist Yale University lost its way? But Yale did have a spy graduate from its university over 200 years ago. He was a 21-year-old. His name