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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Eternal Beauty and Everlasting Lord of all, cherry blossoms in Washington are a true sign of the new life of spring. They bring tourists from across the Nation and from around the world to marvel at fragile beauty and seek lasting promise here in the Nation's capital of these United States.

Lord, bless the work of Congress during these days of grace. May the freshness of new ideas and bold undertakings bolster the vigor of the Nation while the hard work of all Americans, the steadfast perseverance of military forces and the stability of family life sustain a climate of creativity and prosperity for all Your people.

While the hidden roots of faith penetrate the landscape upon which we walk and the far reaching branches of charity draw strength from the sky above, it is You who produce blossoms of hope in human hearts, living in an anxious yet cold world, and you do this here, now, and forever.

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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. BERKLEY 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain 10 one-minutes on each side.

LONE STAR VOICE: GARY SPURGER

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Gary Spurger of Humble, Texas has written me about unlawful entry into the United States. He says:

"I am writing you as I sit here and listen to the news and watch on TV the protests against immigration policy reform. I am tired of seeing those protesters walking the streets that we taxpayers pay for, using our school buses and resources and then waving Mexican flags and chanting 'Mexico, Mexico.'"

"Please do not be blinded by the protests supporting illegal immigrants. If we don't take care of us then we will not have the ability to help others less fortunate. Allowing illegal immigrants to siphon off resources that they provide no compensation to will in the end be the fall of our society.

"We need to take heed of the lessons of history such as Rome. It fell from the inside by allowing fractured and discordant groups to maintain their own unique identity to the extent that it caused Rome to no longer be Rome but nothing more than a bunch of little other countries. Recent history is teaching us just by looking at France, it is no longer French but so inclusive to the point that France is nothing more than a hodgepodge of other cultures, not French."

Mr. Speaker, people that come to the United States must do so legally and they must expect to assimilate into this country and become Americans.

And that's just the way it is.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN AND NUCLEAR WASTE

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

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, just when I think the Department of Energy couldn't become more incompetent or dangerous, they do something that proves me wrong.

You will find this cartoon character on a taxpayer-funded Web site run by the Department of Energy. His job, Yucca Mountain Johnny, is to convince kids in Nevada that nuclear waste is okay and that the State of Nevada is a safe place to store nuclear waste.

What really bothers me is the message that Yucca Mountain Johnny is giving to our school children. This is akin to Joe Camel telling our school kids that smoking is healthy.

The Department of Energy ought to dump Yucca Mountain Johnny and his slanted, one-sided view of how our Nation should address the issue of nuclear waste disposal. We should stop using taxpayers' money to spread this message. It is despicable.

The Las Vegas Sun wrote in an editorial on March 25, "Children don't need a cartoon character to tell them what is easily understood by most people: nuclear waste is dangerous. Don't let anyone bury it in your backyard."

Save the people of the State of Nevada, the school children, and get rid of Yucca Mountain Johnny. It is disgusting.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, as Members of the House of Representatives, we are aware of the awesome power that we have to make laws under which

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

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we all are governed, but we are also uniquely acquainted with our own limitations. Polls may indeed show that a majority of our constituents today would simply like to see our current immigration laws enforced, but we are in a position to know that such is unreasonable.

Deciding whether our role is to lead or to follow is not a new conundrum. During the Constitutional Convention in 1787, George Washington counseled: "If to please the people we do what we ourselves disprove, how can we afterwards defend our work?" It might be comfortable in an election year to warm ourselves by the populist fire that we ourselves have stoked, but it is not leadership.

Leaders appeal to the better angels of our nature rather than bow to the manifestations of our baser instincts. The standard bearer of the modern conservative movement, Ronald Reagan, understood this very well when he talked about the shining city on the hill. In his farewell address he described this, "a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls," he said, "the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will to enter."

I hope that that is how we see it today.

DEMOCRATS UNVEIL PLAN FOR REAL SECURITY

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

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Democrats in the House, the Senate and our Governors unveiled the Democratic plan for real security. This plan reveals the difference between the Democrats and the Republicans and the Bush administration in protecting our country.

Among the differences, the greatest danger we face is that al Qaeda gets nuclear weapons. The problem with getting nuclear weapons is how to find fissionable material. There is enough fissionable material lying around not properly guarded in the former Soviet Union for thousands of bombs. The Bush administration wants to get it out of there—in 30 years. Democrats say, Get it now, all of it, by 2010 before it is smuggled to al Qaeda to make nuclear weapons to use against American citizens.

We are rightly concerned about the Dubai Ports deal, who controls our ports, but more important is what comes into our ports. Eleven million shipping containers a year, 40-foot boxes, come into American ports. The Republicans, the Bush administration, inspects 5 percent of them. Democrats say, no shipping container, not one, should be put on a ship bound to an American port till it is electronically scanned and inspected by the United States in the foreign port so that no

atomic bomb gets put in there and we know about it before it gets on the ship, not after.

If we want to make our country safe, we better elect some Democrats.

CONGRATULATING OHIO GIRLS' STATE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL CHAMPION MOUNT NOTRE DAME COUGARS

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, while I was at home last week in Ohio's First Congressional District, I had the honor of attending a pep rally at Mount Notre Dame High School. The school spirit in that gym was really something to behold. Of course there was cause for celebration, since the Cougars captured their second Ohio girls' State basketball championship in the last 3 years with an overall record of 25-3. The Cougars faced a difficult road to the championship, including a regional final victory over a tough Oak Hills Lady Scots team, which also happens to be in my congressional district.

Mount Notre Dame basketball has become synonymous with success throughout the State of Ohio. Not only have they appeared in the State finals 3 years in a row, but this victory made the Cougars the first Cincinnati girls' basketball program to capture two State titles. It is also important to note that Mount Notre Dame excels in academics.

It is a great honor for me to recognize the success and achievements of these outstanding young women, their head coach Scott Rogers, his staff and the entire student body. Their hard work and dedication makes all Cincinnatians proud.

Go Cougars.

LOBBYING REFORM

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, it is time for a spring clean at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. In the wake of the Jack Abramoff scandal, public approval for this Congress is at an all-time low and voters are demanding new priorities for America. But rather than working to restore the public's trust, some are more interested in protecting the culture of business as usual. They are perfectly happy with their cozy relationships where highly paid lobbyists serve as their "back office," writing legislation, providing jobs to Members and relatives, and lavishing them with expensive dinners and trips.

Yesterday, for instance, the Senate missed an opportunity for real reform when it rejected new restrictions on lobbyist-sponsored travel, presidential libraries, and, most importantly, an independent office of public integrity.

Think about it. You can't take a ham sandwich from a lobbyist but you can

get on their private plane with a ham sandwich. That is what they are allowed to do. You could drive a truck through those types of reforms. The House Ethics Committee hasn't even met in more than a year when one Member here has pled guilty and three others are under investigation.

Mr. Speaker, the American people won't accept the continuation of business as usual under the guise of real reform. When that gavel comes down, it is intended to open the people's House, not the auction house.

It is time for new priorities in America.

HIGHER EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give the American people some straight talk on higher education. The Higher Education Act before Congress today will strengthen the Pell Grant program, expand Perkins student loans, and increase access to college for millions of worthy American students.

The Democrat substitute is called, quote, reverse the raid on student aid. Don't believe the hype. Not one student in America will receive less financial aid under our bill. Not one.

The heart of our bill is the Pell Grant program. Let's look at this chart to show the history of Pell Grant funding over 20 years. The yellow represents when the Democrats were in control of Congress. The red represents when Republicans were in control of Congress. Does that look like we have raided student aid to you? The last 3 years Democrats were in control of Congress, they had a Democrat House and a Democrat President and they cut Pell Grants every single year in a row.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are sick and tired of partisan slogans and election-year double talk. This is a good bill. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 609.

DEMOCRATIC REAL SECURITY PLAN: REAL SECURITY STARTS AT HOME

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday congressional Democrats unveiled our detailed agenda to fully secure our Nation. Since 9/11, we have worked to make America safer, and we have attempted to work in a nonpartisan way, the record will show. Immediately after 9/11, myself and some Democrats were given the assignment to structure ways of improving our intelligence, aiding our first responders, and securing our infrastructure.

And really it is unconscionable that some Republicans, some, have said that this party had to wait till yesterday to