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No. 46

House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. DRAKE).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 25, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THELMA D. CRAKE 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:

Renewed in spirit by religious observances and the fresh breath of spring, Members of Congress return today to offer You, Lord God, praise and thanks. Strengthened by family ties, conversations with neighbors, and meetings with constituents back home, they are again grounded by the human relationships that make them one with the people they represent and whom they serve.

May the hopes, concerns, and heartfelt needs they carry back to Federal Government find full expression in their committee work and public policy and the just laws they formulate. In all their endeavors may they listen, Lord, and learn from one another, and together reach a new depth of corporate civility.

May they become aware that in serving your people, they serve You, Lord God; for You alone are Father of all and the source of love and justice, both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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, April 7, 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 April 7, 2006, at 3:30 p.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 3351.

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 366.

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 382.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

SENIORS ARE PLEASED WITH MEDICARE PART D

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, last week House Republicans hosted over 200 Medicare part D events across the country to educate seniors on this new prescription drug plan and to help them enroll. I hosted two successful Medicare part D enrollment workshops in North Carolina's Fifth Congressional District and was pleased to help many of my constituents sign up to get coverage and save money on their prescriptions.

This is a program that is working for most seniors, and early problems are quickly being corrected. Recently the Washington Post and ABC News reported that of the 30 million-plus seniors who have already enrolled, three-quarters said that the paperwork was easy to complete, and nearly two-thirds say that Medicare part D saved them money.

It is important for seniors interested in this program to enroll by May 15. Seniors do not have to be experts on Medicare to enroll. They can simply call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit medicare.gov for information and personalized assistance. These resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If Medicare part D can help you or your loved ones, don't miss this opportunity.

GAS PRICES

(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. Madam Speaker, nothing was more talked about during the work recess than the outrageous gasoline prices as they go up and up and up. None were more harmed than seniors, others on fixed income, and, of course, America's families who are struggling. We also in Texas had a rolling blackout.

So we must act now; not the Republican agenda, not the agenda that does

□ 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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not work, but Democrats and Republicans must work together to act and pass solutions. We must have, if you will, a conservation day, 1 day that you are on public transportation or bicycles; taxes on the excessive CEO salaries, how much can they spend? We must have, of course, a tax on the outrageous profits of the energy companies, but, more importantly, that tax can be used as a rebate, a one-time \$10 rebate to those families who are at a certain income; review of the release of barrels from the petroleum reserve; Congressional hearings on the allegation of price gouging; the FTC, the Federal Trade Commission, must be out in the field doing a national survey on gas prices, an assessment of the market, analyzing the exploiting of political issues like Iraq and Iran.

The President must take leadership. Government incentives for domestic production of ethanol and town hall meetings will be held in my district, and also we must do exploration in the gulf. Outrageous gas prices require us to act.

A TRIBUTE TO SPECIALIST MARK W. MELCHER

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

Mr. MURPHY. Madam Speaker, I rise with a somber mood to recognize a citizen, a patriot, a soldier who gave his life for a cause he believed in serving his country as a soldier in Iraq.

Mark Melcher lived in Pittsburgh his entire life. He grew up on the north side watching the Steelers, Pirates and Penguins play, and graduated the from North Catholic High School in 1989. Soon afterwards, he joined the Army. He served in Operation Desert Storm in Kuwait.

Following the 1991 conflict to liberate Kuwait, Mark returned home to begin working at the Mellon Financial Corporation. He then served in the National Guard's 1st Battalion, 103rd Armored Division located in Friedens, in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Mark departed for military training on the morning of Sunday, February 5th. Sadly, on April 15, 2006, just a month after arriving in theater, Mark was killed when his tank he manned came under fire outside of Baghdad. He was 34 years old. He is survived by his parents, Kathy and John Melcher, Sr., of Ross, Pennsylvania. I commend the deepest sympathies of all Members of this House to the Melcher family.

Also I offer the gratitude of every American. We should never forget his devotion of duty, his love of country. Today and every day let us give thanks to Mark Melcher, his family, and indeed all of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and the marines.

John Melcher, Sr., Mark's father, said of Mark, my son believed in the cause, he loved his country, gave his life for his country. You don't get any

better than that. Yes, sir, Mr. Melcher, you do not get any better than that.

ESCALATING GAS PRICES

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, as every other Member, I have just returned from my congressional district, which includes a major part of the Dallas metropolitan area, and they have some of the highest gas prices in the Nation.

Recent reports revealed that gas prices have shot up nearly 25 cents per gallon over the past 2 weeks. In December of 2003, gas averaged \$1.50 a gallon. Now gas is reaching \$3 a gallon. While I agree that supply-and-demand forces are part of the reason behind the escalating gas prices, I also believe that price gouging is a fundamental problem.

Congress must act and enact innovative policies such as windfall profit tax on the gas companies and greater investments in alternative fuels, fuel efficiency, even public transportation.

Madam Speaker, I urge the Republican leadership to stop the rhetoric and start thinking about the real change.

SALUTING THE LEADERSHIP OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD

(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. Madam Speaker, as a 31-year veteran of the Army National Guard and the father of three serving in the military today, I greatly appreciate the military successes that have been achieved under the leadership of Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Secretary Rumsfeld has worked tirelessly in the global war on terrorism and led our troops to liberate 25 million people in Afghanistan, defeat Saddam Hussein's enormous Army in 18 days, train over 250,000 Iraqi security forces, capture countless terrorists, and further the greatest spread of freedom in the history of the world.

House and Senate Democrats promised a substantive national security policy over a month ago, but they continue to practice the strategy of retreat and defeat, which does not protect our country.

Fortunately, Secretary Rumsfeld and the U.S. military remain committed to fighting terrorists in Iraq, Afghanistan and worldwide so that we do not have to face them on the streets of America.

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

BUSH PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAX—TWENTY DAYS LEFT UNTIL TAX TAKES PLACE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, the countdown continues. If neither the Bush administration nor this Congress act within the next 20 days, seniors who have yet to sign up for the new prescription drug plan will be penalized with a Bush prescription drug tax that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

It is bad enough that the new prescription drug plan is so confusing and complicated that a vast majority of seniors have yet to sign up, but now, if seniors choose a drug plan after May 15, they will be penalized with a tax that will only make their prescription drug costs higher.

The Bush administration refuses to extend the deadline, even though they have heard recent reports of seniors waiting on the phone as long as 30 minutes to get more information on these private drug plans.

If House Republicans do not join us in extending this unfair deadline, seniors will encounter at least a 7 percent Bush prescription drug tax that they will be forced to pay every month for the rest of their lives.

As we check off another day on the calendar, House Republicans now only have another 20 more days to stand up and support America's seniors. It is time Republicans do the right thing.

GASOLINE PRICES—SOBER ACTION DEMANDED

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, talk is cheap, and gas prices aren't. With summertime right around the corner, Americans are making plans to pack up their car and hit the road for a summer vacation. However, this year gas prices are putting a damper on those summer plans.

The President and most Members of Congress appreciate something the American people know well, America has an addiction to oil. But higher gas prices today are the product of many different factors, including governmental regulation and heightened worldwide demand. Here at home we are best able to adapt by using tools at our disposal.

In the weeks ahead, Congress must continue to act on behalf of the American people by providing incentives for energy conservation and the development of alternative energy sources. We should expand our domestic oil production, including building new refineries and expanding current ones. Above all, Members of Congress cannot talk about the rise in energy prices and then say "no" to reforms when it comes time to vote.