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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Canon Andrew White, Anglican Vicar of Iraq, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, on this national day of prayer, give to this House wisdom and mercy. As its Members lead this great Nation, give them eyes to see Your majesty and ears to hear Your guidance and knowledge to know Your ways.

May they be aware of Your presence with them as they provide leadership to the world. And may they know Your love for them and Your care for all they do.

May Your glory fill this House and Your presence direct all its Members. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And may God bless and protect America. In the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 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 gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FOLEY 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 at this time will entertain up to five 1-minutes on each side.

HELP SMALL BUSINESS

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

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, the more we help small businesses, the more jobs they create for local residents across the country. That is why we passed the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Act in 2003.

The economy has been growing ever since. More than 5 million new jobs have been created. But we need to do more. Small business owners in my district in New York's Hudson Valley tell me they feel overwhelmed by excessive taxes. We need to give them more tax relief and more incentives to continue hiring new workers.

We should extend and make permanent the small business tax relief provisions that have been critical to economic growth. We need to increase small business expensing limits so small businesses can continue growing their businesses and creating new jobs. And we should pass the Small Business Tax Relief Act. We should phase out the Alternative Minimum Tax that is especially harmful to small business owners.

Mr. Speaker, some have suggested letting tax cuts expire, which would amount to a major tax increase on America's small businesses. Raising taxes on small businesses would reverse this trend of economic growth and job creation. We must continue our economic policies that are working and continue developing new ways to help our small businesses.

FALCONBRIDGE/INCO

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, last fall, Canadian nickel producers Inco and Falconbridge merged. Canadian

regulators have approved the deal, and decisions from both the United States and EU regulators are pending.

However, a minority shareholder of Falconbridge, Xstrata, is trying to scuttle the deal to maintain its control in the market. The controlling shareholder behind Xstrata is the secretive Swiss commodities trader Glencore.

Last year, a CIA report raised allegations that Glencore paid millions in illegal kickbacks to Saddam Hussein's regime. Glencore was founded by Marc Rich, a man who faced jail for tax fraud, racketeering and arms trading. His influence and personnel are still involved in Glencore.

Whatever one's view on the Inco-Falconbridge merger, when it comes to this commodity that is important for our military and to our commercial interests, the actions of Glencore clearly raises concerns that regulators and this House should monitor.

DEMOCRATS IN DENIAL

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, when it comes to our economy, denial is alive and well on the other side of the aisle. The Commerce Department reported Friday that the economy grew at 4.8 percent in the first quarter of 2006. This is the fastest pace in more than 2 years, and the economy has now grown for 18 straight quarters. The Conference Board's Index of Consumer Confidence also increased to the highest level since May, 2002.

These reports indicate that the great news of our thriving economy has reached the American people. Despite the efforts of House Democrats to paint a gloomy picture, Americans are spending their money and thoroughly enjoying the success of our economic boom.

Not only is our economy growing at a record pace, but in the past year the

□ 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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number of first-time jobless claims has fallen 6.5 percent, while the number of continuing claims is down 8 percent. Jobs were created in 48 States between March, 2005, and March, 2006, while jobless rates were down in 43 States.

Madam Speaker, the good economic news is flowing in like a river, and it will continue as long as we pursue Republican pro-growth tax policies. And as hard as Democrats try, they just can't deny that.

COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call on Congress to address our Nation's health care crisis without further delay. Nearly 46 million Americans live without health insurance every day. In my State, more than 1.4 million people, that is one in five North Carolinians under the age of 65, do not have health insurance.

This is not just a policy debate; it is a challenge to our Nation. If we cannot develop a means to deliver affordable health care to everyone, we are failing in providing the most basic of protection to our citizens.

I think the key to a strong community is to have healthy individuals and families. We need everyone, labor, business, health care professionals, seniors and others, working together to develop solutions to make it work.

This Congress must pass legislation that provides adequate reimbursement rates for medical providers, that helps small businesses and the self-employed to have affordable health care insurance, and that provides our community health centers with the funding that they need. We must defeat proposed budget cuts in Medicare and Medicaid that will hurt American families.

We must all keep fighting until affordable quality health care is no longer a privilege for some but the right of all.

ECONOMIC GOOD NEWS CONTINUES

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, another month has passed and good economic news continues to roll in. Last month, the U.S. economy added 211,000 jobs. That marks 31 consecutive months of job growth. Thirty-one straight months. The unemployment rate is now 4.7 percent. Thirty-one months of small and large businesses expanding, hiring, and investing.

And Americans know that things look bright. So what do they do? They take that confidence and they invest. On Tuesday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at a 6-year high.

America's economy is thriving, Madam Speaker, across the board.

Homeownership is up, the number of minority owned businesses is up, and the job market for today's college graduates is the best it has been in over 5 years. These numbers don't lie, and they are very clear to see. The American economy is alive and well.

Madam Speaker, this is good news. Americans know this, and I encourage my colleagues to recognize this as well.

□ 1015

KEEP ILLEGAL DRUGS ILLEGAL

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

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, for the third day in a row I planned to come to the floor of Congress and strongly criticize the Mexican Government for voting for a new law to legalize drugs. For the past 2 days, I pointed out that as a result of this pathetic new law, millions of American young people who travel to Mexico for summer vacation would now legally be able to use cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, and marijuana.

When President Fox announced Tuesday he was going to sign this new drug legalization law, I came to the House floor and asked: Who is advising this guy, Courtney Love?

Well, a miracle happened last night. President Fox reversed course and announced that he would not sign the law, effectively vetoing and killing the legislation. He said he was sensitive to the opinions of those who oppose legalizing drugs and he would make it absolutely clear that the possession and use of drugs in Mexico will remain a criminal offense. Bravo, President Fox. I applaud your commonsense decision and your willingness to listen to our concerns. It is a positive step forward for U.S.-Mexico relations.

BUSH ECONOMIC POLICIES

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, last week's economic news underscored major flaws with the Bush economic policies. The economy is growing and productivity is high, but the benefits of growth are showing up in the bottom lines of companies, not in the paychecks of American workers.

Last Friday, while the Commerce Department reported a rebound in GDP from a weak fourth quarter, the Labor Department reported that a key measure of the compensation paid to workers failed to keep up with increases in the cost of living. The typical family is seeing its economy squeezed by rising costs of gasoline, health care, and college educations.

The President and his colleagues on the other side of the aisle are more interested in fiscal policies that worsen

the budget deficit than in addressing the real economic challenges that are facing America's working families.

LONE STAR VOICE ON IMMIGRATION

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, a high school senior in Texas writes about the illegal entry into the United States. She says, "I am a senior in the Klein School District. I am also the daughter of an immigrant family. I have the highest regard for the government and the rules placed before those who want to share this American dream. I see my family struggling each day to be sure to be by the books by following the limits and regulations set by the government. Unfortunately, there are others who are not."

"I can relate to those who want to be here, but when you allow these illegals to continue to cross the borders, there is a stereotype that is placed on the rest of us who diligently strive to follow the law. I know it is possible to come to the United States legally, and I know that it is difficult, but we need to tighten the borders."

"We all know there are many good and decent people who have a desire to work in the United States, but what about those who are mingling with the good people, bringing with them drugs and coming with a desire to do harm? There are many murders, rapes and vandalisms that will never be solved because many of those responsible return to their homeland. Protect me, my family and the good people of Texas by strengthening the Border Patrol. Also, be more stringent on the INS to be vigilant in maintaining order in the influx of outsiders that are coming to this country."

Madam Speaker, this high school senior has it right. Secure the borders or America will suffer. And that's just the way it is.

REPUBLICANS OFFER NO REAL ENERGY SOLUTION

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

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, Washington Republicans realize they have a credibility problem with the American people when it comes to their cozy relationships with the oil industry.

For 5 years now, President Bush has stacked his administration with energy executives. Shortly after he took office, Newsweek commented that "not since the rise of the railroads more than a century ago has a single industry placed so many foot soldiers at the top of the new administration."

Two-thirds of the Department of Energy and its transition team worked for the energy industry, including