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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. CAMPBELL of California).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 10, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN CAMPBELL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

The Reverend Ross Thomson, Bammel Church of Christ, Houston, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Lord, as we gather in this city named for him, we remember George Washington's most precious possession: the keys always on his nightstand, the keys given to him by General Lafayette, the keys to the Bastille.

Lord, we thank You that, two centuries later, we still hold the keys of freedom. We are mindful that then and now, our greatest power is our ability to win hearts and minds; our greatest gift to mankind the inspiration of our ideas; our greatest influence that of moral persuasion.

Lord, You have allowed this Nation the honor of being freedom's first line of defense, and her last bastion of hope. Grant that we might live worthy of our calling and worthy of the hope of those who have gone before; that we in this place, might conduct ourselves with honor, courage and integrity, worthy of this great Republic, worthy of the sacrifices of its citizens. 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 Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. STUPAK 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND ROSS THOMSON

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Ross Thomson was born in Scotland in 1956. At the age of 4, his family moved to Toowoomba, Australia, where he was raised. While there, he became a Christian. In 1975, faith took his family to Salisbury, Rhodesia for mission work among the Shona tribe. He worked with his father, and would devote the rest of his life to saving souls.

Having lived the ministry for years, Ross moved to the United States to study. He obtained his bachelor and master's degree in theology from Harding University. He did further postgraduate work at Rice University.

In 1989 he married Christine, who is with us today, and moved his family to southeast Texas, Alice, Texas, where he preached for the Morningside Drive congregation.

He has preached for the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Northlake Church of Christ in Atlanta, Georgia. Currently he is the pulpit minister for the 1,200

member Bammel Church of Christ in Houston.

Christine and Ross are blessed with three children, Joshua, Savannah and Justin.

It is clear Ross, with his proper Scottish background, was not born in Texas, but he got there as fast as he could. He became a U.S. citizen in 2002.

One of my favorite stories about Ross was his first trip to an American grocery store. The first place he went was a southern grocery store called Piggly Wiggly. Puzzled, he didn't quite understand that concept.

He has done much to preach the gospel of Jesus in Texas, and spends time in the people business. So today we welcome Ross here to the United States Congress, and appreciate his determination to practice and live the freedom of religion under the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

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

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank our local partners in helping spread the word about the new prescription drug benefit. Southeastern Virginia Senior Services and Eastern Shore Senior Services have worked very diligently to sign people up and to spread information.

Many of our local pharmacists, I would like to thank them as well, have allowed people to drop off their information and return for a list of the plans that cover their drugs.

Remember, Medicare part D is a voluntary program. It is a private sector insurance plan with a reduced premium. Many seniors do not need to sign up at all because their coverage is as good or better than Medicare. That would include our Federal retirees, State retirees, military, and many private sector retirees.

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

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TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, it is a big day inside the Beltway here, the long-anticipated Republican tax cuts are here, the fifth of the Bush Presidency. You would think with huge deficits maybe they would reconsider; but no, they are plowing ahead. Tonight, rivers of champagne will flow in corporate board rooms across America.

Under this bill, we will borrow \$70 billion and immediately give \$50 billion of it to wealthy investors. We will borrow \$70 billion and give \$50 billion to wealthy investors in big tax breaks to those who clip coupons off dividend-paying stocks and capital gains.

A person who earns \$40,000 a year, they might get a \$20 break under this bill. But those who earn \$5 million, \$82,000 off their tax bill. It is a great country. Yet Republicans couldn't find room in this bill for a tuition tax deduction. They had to bump that out. You know, these are tough times, people have to sacrifice; not the people in the board rooms and not the wealthy investors, but middle class America who want their kids to get an education. They couldn't fit it in the bill.

They are discriminating against wages and salary earners and favoring the investors with lower tax breaks. They are borrowing money and handing the bill to people who work for wages and salaries. I don't think that it is that they really hate wage and salary earners, they just favor the wealthy who fund their campaigns.

TACKLING THE NATION'S ENERGY POLICIES

(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 high gas prices and energy costs that we are experiencing now demonstrate more than ever we have to increase the urgency of achieving U.S. oil independence from foreign sources of oil. Congress needs to work faster to develop new fuel choices and achieve fuel savings.

I am a cosponsor of the Fuel Choices for American Security Act. Our legislation initiates a plan to achieve U.S. oil savings of 2.5 million barrels per day by 2015. That is the amount of oil we currently import from the Middle East every day.

Our plan is committed to developing alternative energy courses and renewable fuels. It will create better market incentives to use the resources and technology already available here in America to develop new fuel choices and bring them to consumers faster.

As long as the U.S. dependence on foreign oil continues to increase, gas prices will continue to increase as well.

Looking backward and using high gas prices to launch political attacks gives us no solution to the Nation's energy problems. Political maneuvers are not an energy policy. Looking forward by passing this bipartisan legislation is the correct approach to implementing the initiatives we need to tackle the Nation's energy problems. Let us commit ourselves to the American consumer and not to politics.

AMT BECOMES ATM

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, nothing spells out the political cynicism and misplaced Republican priorities better than the tax bill we are about to vote upon. More assistance to the people in the top one-tenth of a percent whose burden has actually fallen 25 percent since Bush took office, the over-million-dollar crowd will get an additional \$40,000 a year for the next 10 years.

But the Republican leadership and the Bush administration is playing Russian roulette with the alternative minimum tax and the 15.3 million families whose only sin is to pay taxes, pay their mortgage and raise their families. Every year more of them fall into a trap, and each year the Republican leadership fails to make a long-term fix a priority. They would rather play politics with the favored few.

This misguided priority is shameful, as Medicare and Medicaid deficits widen and the national debt increases. The alternative minimum tax, the AMT, has become an ATM to finance more tax cuts for people who need it least and put at risk 33 million American families who will fall into the AMT tax trap by 2010 when the house of cards comes crashing down.

AL QAEDA DISORGANIZATION

(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, earlier this week the Associated Press reported from Baghdad that recently discovered al Qaeda and Iraq documents demonstrate that the terrorists are "concerned about disorganization within their cells in the capital area, with one extremist describing them as simply a 'daily annoyance' to the Iraqi government."

In one document, a terrorist complains that "the Americans and the

Iraqi government forces 'were able to absorb our painful blows,' raise new recruits and 'take control of Baghdad as well as other areas, one after the other.'"

Another terrorist complained about "the strength of brothers in Baghdad and is based mostly on car bombs and groups of assassins lacking any organized military capabilities."

These documents demonstrate that courageous American troops and Iraqi security forces are breaking the will of the terrorists in Iraq to protect American families.

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

GAS PRICES DIRECT RESULT OF FAILED POLICIES

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today's record gas prices are the direct result of 5 years of failed policies by the Bush administration and this Republican Congress.

We seem to be more interested in giving still more tax breaks to oil executives than providing real relief to American consumers. Rather than proposing policies that would aggressively confront our energy challenges, Republicans are once again pushing to drill in ANWR. They neglect to say that drilling in ANWR would not be possible for another decade and would only provide about 6 months of oil for the American consumer.

House Republicans are also suggesting waiving environmental laws to encourage new refinery construction. But all of the major oil companies have already testified that environmental laws are not what is preventing them from building more refineries. It is more personally profitable to pay out lower-taxed-dividends than invest retained earnings in refineries.

So along with the silly \$100 rebate, this is another proposal from House Republicans that will do nothing to reduce prices at the pump today. But the American consumer is beginning to realize it is time to try something new. It is time for a change in leadership.

□ 1015

MEXICO HARSHER ON ILLEGALS THAN U.S.

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

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, last week, street protests revealed a lot about the hypocrisy of Mexico. With a great deal of bluster and self-righteousness, the protestors objected to the House-approved border security bill.

They said it was "too harsh."

They said it was "draconian."

They said we shouldn't criminalize 11 million illegal immigrants.