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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: "We place our trust in the word of the Lord. All our hope is in Your Holy Name."

Eternal God and Father of us all, February weather would deceive us and have us think spring is yet a long way off. Yet even as the snows penetrate the depths of the earth, Your laws nurture new life. Winter's weight breaks off what seems unfruitful branches; and rushing streams wash away all that is rootless.

Invigorate the House of Representatives; that restorative justice may inspire new confidence in this Nation; and the work of Congress may produce a fruitful land.

May the daily work of Your people silence a cynical world with blossoms of truth. And early growth release the scent of eternal life in the seasons of our lifeline 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 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.

DEMOCRATS CANNOT HAVE IT BOTH WAYS

(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 rise today to discuss the NSA terrorist surveillance program. It seems that on this issue the Democrats want to have their cake and eat it, too. They want to say they are tough on national security while at the same time demonizing anything that President Bush does to protect our country.

On the one hand, we have the junior Senator from Massachusetts calling the program "illegal." Other Democrats have deemed this a "domestic spying program." And when this program came to light, leading Democrats acted outraged as if they did not know about it. But now these same Democrats are admitting that in fact they were briefed on the program all along and are arguing that they actually support the NSA program. So which is it?

Mr. Speaker, Democrats must decide. They cannot have it both ways. The American people deserve to know where the Democratic Party stands on this issue. If they disagree with the terrorist surveillance program, then they need to say so and offer up a real alternative. But let me remind them: criticism, demagoguery and demonizing are not alternatives.

MEDICARE PART D DISASTROUS PROGRAM

(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, the Medicare part D plan is getting some rave reviews. You might be surprised to hear a Democrat say that; but, yes, it is: Rave reviews from the CEOs of pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies and a few political hacks downtown appointed by President Bush.

But from seniors, there is incredible confusion; and if they find their way

through this myriad of confusing plans and find one that provides the drugs they need, they find now there is a new barrier. These are the most restrictive insurance products in history in terms of prior approval for needed drugs.

One company has 39 different forms, which its CEO denied until he was shown them. Then he said, Oh, yes, that is right, I guess we do. They require doctors to conduct all sorts of tests for drugs that seniors have been taking for years to prove that they really need them. And even then if you get a plan that lets you through and does give you your drugs, they can change that benefit on a weekly basis, but seniors cannot change plans on a weekly basis.

And then there is the doughnut hole. I had my first constituent call about the doughnut hole. She has exhausted her benefits. She is on Social Security disability, and she has to pay \$2,850 out of pocket for drugs to stay alive. She does not have \$2,850.

PRAISING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF USAID IN IRAQ

(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, since 2003, the United States Agency for International Development has supported efforts to revitalize Iraq's economy, improve education, develop a vibrant civil society, and assist Iraqis in the development of their new democracy which protects American families by denying terrorists training camps.

Thanks to USAID, 10 sewage treatment plants in Iraq have been refurbished; 97 percent of Iraqi children

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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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have been immunized against polio; 8.6 million new textbooks have been supplied to Iraqi schools; 790,000 Iraqis participated in town meetings on democracy during their historic elections; five cities in Iraq have 19 refurbished or expanded water treatment plants; nearly 3,000 Iraqi schools have been rehabbed; 2,500 Iraqis have been trained to provide primary health care; 1,200 megawatts of new/rehabilitation generation capacity have been added to Iraqi's electricity grid.

Today, the Victory in Iraq Caucus will host USAID Iraq director Dawn Liberi to learn more about progress taking place throughout Iraq. I urge my colleagues to join me for this important event.

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

HEADLINES

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Press Secretary Scott McClellan said, "We are moving on to the priorities of the American people. That is our focus."

Well, Scott, here are the headlines my constituents care about:

"Ex-CIA Official Says Iraq Data Was Distorted; White House Knew of Levee Failure; Brown Faults White House and Agency for Poor Response; Doctors, Pharmacists Say Medicare Benefit Limits Drugs For Seniors; Government Will Forgo \$7 Billion in Oil, Gas Royalties; Bush Budget Would Kill Popular Health Projects; Government Was Underpaid \$345 Billion; American Bar Association Says Bush Exceeded Constitutional Powers in Surveillance Program; Washington Lobbyists Spent \$1.6 Billion in First Half of 2005 Lobbying Congress; Photograph Shows Abramoff with Bush in May 2001; Iran Restarts Uranium Program."

Scott, if you are listening, the American people are ready and waiting. As they say in the news industry, good night and good luck.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VIRGINIA HAMMERSCHMIDT

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a member of our congressional family, Mrs. Virginia Hammerschmidt, the wife of former Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt. Virginia and John Paul were married for almost 58 years before she passed away over the holiday recess.

Any of us who have had the honor of serving in this House know that the full support, encouragement and guidance of a loving spouse makes our job so much easier. John Paul served in this institution for 26 years. I am sure

that he would be the first to tell you that he could not have done it without Ginny by his side.

Many of John Paul's former colleagues are still serving in the House today, and they remember Ginny with fondness. Gracious, dignified, sincere, these are some of the words people have used to describe her. I had the privilege of being in her company on numerous occasions and can personally attest to what a warm, caring person she was. She will be missed by many. She touched the lives of so many in Arkansas and here in these halls.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to keep John Paul, his son, John Arthur, and the rest of the Hammerschmidt family in their thoughts and prayers.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG DEBACLE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the Miami Herald got it right when it described the Republican Medicare prescription drug plan as an "unmitigated disaster."

For years, American seniors have been looking for help in paying for their prescription drugs. Republicans chose to pass a confusing law that forces seniors to go outside of their trusted Medicare to receive drug coverage from one of many private insurance plans. We have all heard stories of seniors leaving pharmacies without their drugs after being told their name could not be found in the system. Talk about incompetence.

But then again, this prescription drug plan is another sorry example of how congressional Republicans have turned this House over to the special interests. Republicans chose to help the pharmaceutical and insurance companies rather than help the seniors who desperately need assistance with skyrocketing drug prices.

Democrats have a plan to take this House back from the special interests so we do not have another prescription drug debacle in the future.

RAISING AWARENESS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Cannon Caucus, I hosted an event for diplomats based in D.C. to watch portions of a film entitled "Human Trafficking."

We had 97 countries, over 160 diplomats, many ambassadors there. They were very interested to learn what other countries are doing, the cooperation and partnership between nations and leaders around the world to combat trafficking in persons. They are very interested in increased training for their staff, particularly consular

staff, and the many NGOs and their resources that are available.

I want to thank the governmental leaders, the law enforcement personnel, NGOs, business people, and ordinary citizens around the world who are helping combat this horrible exploitation and violence against women and children.

I look forward to talking with them again about creative ways to stop trafficking, not just through stronger legislation and prosecution of traffickers but through other means, particularly providing assistance to victims, their families, addressing corruption, interdicting assets.

I commend to my colleagues this film, "Human Trafficking." It will be shown on TV on April 22 to educate yourself on this issue.

DISTURBING REVELATIONS ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN

(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, a newspaper article headline states, "Yucca In need of Repair After 9 Years." It says that Yucca Mountain research facilities, from ground support to railroad tracks, need repairs after just 9 years of use.

Now this is the same Yucca Mountain that the Energy Department is proposing to put hundreds of thousands of tons of toxic radioactive nuclear waste for hundreds of thousands of years.

Just this past week Energy Secretary Bodman said, "There are problems with the U.S. Geological Survey work that was done," and we now know that the work was fudged and they made up the data. "There are problems with the EPA standards," and we know they are short by 290,000 years. "And there are problems with the efforts of the Department of Energy."

What did the Department of Energy just say: They can no longer estimate how long it will take to ready Yucca Mountain to accept nuclear waste or how much it will cost.

The latest estimate is \$308 billion, and now the Energy Department says that might not be right. It is time that we stop this boondoggle, end this project and let us figure out a sane and sensible way of dealing with nuclear energy in this country.

CONGRATULATING KENNESAW STATE LADY OWLS

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kennesaw State University women's cross country team on winning the 2005 Atlantic Sun Conference championship.

The Lady Owls exhibited dedication, teamwork and perseverance all season long, and it paid off. I congratulate