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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. HOLDEN).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 6, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TIM HOLDEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Chaplain (Maj.) Jonathan J. Etterbeek, 32nd Medical Brigade, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we humbly request Your blessing upon today's session of the United States House of Representatives. Grant guidance and wisdom upon our legislators in advocating equal opportunity, truth, and justice according to the convictions of their conscience, and in accordance with the will of the American people who we have the honor and privilege to serve.

May our legislators exemplify principle-centered, value-based leadership, and may all our thoughts, words, and actions be pleasing and acceptable in Your sight.

Lord, we also remember all of our military men and women serving the cause of democracy and human rights throughout the world today, especially those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice upon the altar of freedom. Thank You for spiritually sustaining us in the defense of liberty, which we as Americans hold sacred and are called to defend.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 196. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Rotunda and grounds of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

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.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. COBLE 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 CHAPLAIN (MAJ.) JONATHAN J. ETTERBEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, today it is my honor to welcome Major Jonathan Etterbeek to the House of Representatives to deliver the House invocation. He is a native of Holland, Michigan, and he is a chaplain of the U.S. Army's 32nd Medical Brigade.

The House is honored to have you with us today. We appreciate you being here to deliver this invocation. It is a time-honored tradition in this historic Chamber to request God's guidance as Congress conducts the business of the American people. We thank you for doing that.

Major Etterbeek is a graduate of Holland High School, Hope College, and Western Theological Seminary, and he is currently stationed in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

While he has many accomplishments and a distinguished record in the military, it was especially important in 2005 where I had the opportunity in front of a hometown audience to present him with the medals that he earned for his distinguished service while he was in Iraq. I was honored to award him the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Iraq Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Combat Action Badge.

Major Etterbeek, thank you for being here today. Thank you for your service to this country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 10 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

☐ 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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JUDGING PEOPLE BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, last June 6 I voted for a hate crimes bill in this session, and was proud to do it. Since that time, the black ministers association in my city has come out strongly against the hate crimes bill that provides protection to people against violent crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I addressed that group in Memphis Tuesday a week ago, and at that meeting one of the ministers got up and said to the press, "The reason we're against this bill basically is because a white man can't represent black people."

I represent a black district. I am one of only two Members that do. I plan to represent my people, as I have, and show this country from my district in Memphis, Tennessee, that regardless of race or color, a person should be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin, and they can represent people in this country, for this is indeed one country under God, with liberty and justice for all.

We recently celebrated in my city the 50th anniversary of the 1957 civil rights bill and will have the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King. That event will be in Memphis, Tennessee.

We've come a long way, and we have a long way to go.

CONGRATULATING THE APPALACHIAN STATE MOUNTAINEERS ON THEIR VICTORY OVER THE MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, following Appalachian's upset football win over Michigan, Boone, North Carolina, is no longer a sleepy Blue Ridge mountain town. The representatives from each university responded to last Saturday's contest with class: Appalachian not in-sufferable in victory; Michigan a gracious loser in defeat.

But the beneficiaries of this game, Mr. Speaker, are the underdogs, the little guys who are given little or no chance of tasting the spoils of victory. Appalachian's Mountaineers and Michigan's Wolverines will post impressive records during the 2007 season. But Saturday's game, Mr. Speaker, will reinforce the optimism of the proverbial underdog, with the assurance that their chances of achieving victory, albeit remote, are within the realm of possibility, and much is to be said in support of that conclusion.

GAO REPORT SHOWS THAT IRAQI GOVERNMENT IS NOT LIVING UP TO ITS PROMISES

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, this week we finally got an objective analysis of the situation in Iraq. We shouldn't be surprised that it differs significantly from the status report from the White House last month, which painted a much rosier political and security scenario in Iraq. Nor should we be surprised if its conclusions are different from a final report that is scheduled to come from the President this week.

The GAO findings are not a surprise. When President Bush began this troop escalation plan, he promised this Congress that the Iraqis must meet these benchmarks, and, if they did not, they would lose the support of the American people.

Many of us who opposed the troop escalation plan were skeptical the Iraqis would be able to meet these benchmarks and that 30,000 more troops would bring about any real improvements in securing Iraq. The GAO report shows that our concerns were justified.

With the failure of the Iraqi Government to meet 15 of the 18 benchmarks, it is clear that a change of course is needed. I would hope that my Republican colleagues would stop blindly following President Bush and conclude, much as this Nation has, that it is time to begin bringing our troops home.

TAX PAIN ON AMERICANS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Congress talks about feeling the pain of Americans. Well, raising taxes on them doesn't ease their financial pain. Working families are already burdened with high gasoline prices and increased expenses every day of their lives. Working Americans deserve to keep more of their money. It should be their responsibility how to spend it, not a bunch of tax-and-spend bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We talk a lot about helping American families. Well, let them keep more of their money, instead of taxing them more. More government spending is not a strategy for helping Americans. More taxes on Americans, so special interest groups get more Federal money, is not a strategy for helping Americans.

President Kennedy and President Reagan both proved tax cuts work. Tax cuts, not tax increases, are the fundamental way to move our economy forward. We need to make permanent the tax cuts. And who benefits from tax cuts? Anybody that pays taxes benefits. And those that live off the taxpayer should not expect everybody else to pay more taxes for them.

And that's just the way it is.

SUPPORT AMERICAN TROOPS BY BRINGING THEM HOME

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, all of the photo ops and the doctored statistics in the world will not change the fundamental fact that there is no military solution to the civil war in Iraq. Instead of facing reality, the President is asking for another blank check for his failed policy, and Congress should not give it to him.

We must decide whose interests we represent, a President who has staked his legacy on an unnecessary war, or the millions of Americans that understand that ending the occupation is the first step in repairing the damage that this administration has done to the security of our Nation and the world.

Congress has the power really to end this failed policy. We should not approve another penny to continue that policy. Instead, we should use our constitutionally mandated appropriations power to fully fund the safe, timely and responsible redeployment of our troops and contractors from Iraq.

When we say we support our troops, let's mean it by bringing them home.

VICTORY IN IRAQ

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the plan for General Petraeus' surge was designed to improve Iraq's security so that political and economic progress could follow. Stability measures implemented in violent areas in and around Baghdad and across the nation have produced recognizable results.

There is an increased security in Iraq, and optimistic reports are traveling back from Members of Congress, war critics, and, yes, even the liberal press. Areas once considered terrorist strongholds are now relatively secure. Progress. Sunni and U.S. forces are working together for victory. Progress. Tribal leaders are turning their backs on terrorist insurgents and helping American forces. Progress.

Next week, General Petraeus will deliver a comprehensive report on Iraq and what the surge has produced since he has been on the ground, and I am confident his report will be detailed and honest.

Mr. Speaker, the level of progress is evident, and I believe the continued success of the surge will pave the way for the only way out of Iraq: Victory.

GAO REPORT SHOWS THAT IRAQI GOVERNMENT IS NOT LIVING UP TO ITS PROMISES

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, for months now we have heard from our Republican colleagues that September would be a critical month for the war in Iraq. Earlier this year when this Democratic Congress and the American