



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2007

No. 142

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. HIRONO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 24, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) for 5 minutes.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, 2 years ago, on September 24, Hurricane Rita smashed into Louisiana and Texas, making landfall first in my district at Johnson Bayou in Cameron Parish, a small town in southwest Louisiana. The storm was one of the worst ever to enter into the Gulf of Mexico, causing \$11 billion of damage to the area.

Hard-working individuals at the community level have had the greatest impact on our recovery and reconstruc-

tion, and that's despite fits and starts with government health and so forth. It's the individuals, local officials, families on the ground that made the difference.

This storm also caused unprecedented damage to the oil and gas industry. Again, individuals working in those companies got our oil and gas infrastructure back up and running in record time, so that we could fuel America's energy needs.

At the Federal level, funds have been appropriated for assistance, but they have been clearly slow to arrive, because of bureaucracy. This has been an ongoing battle that we in Congress have had to fight with and local officials have had to fight with as well.

Two weeks ago, I was down there at Johnson Bayou, that little town where they struggled to get their school back. Actually, private funding allowed the school to come back before we could even get Federal funds down there, because of the bureaucracy. That took 2 years, but private funds allowed for the school to be rebuilt. It was one of the first schools to be rebuilt back in Louisiana.

I was down there 2 weeks ago for a very special time. We had a ribbon-cutting for a new health clinic in Johnson Bayou down in Cameron Parish. This little town did not have a health care clinic. It never had one. In fact, families had to drive many, many miles on small roads or oftentimes had to rely on a ferry to cross a body of water to receive health care, and if that ferry was down, they were stranded.

But with the opening of this health clinic, for the first time, families at Johnson Bayou now have access to health care. This was very special, because a family donated the land for the clinic. A company actually put up money, \$2 million to build the clinic, and an additional \$1 million to fund its ongoing operations for the next 3 years. For the first time what we have

now seen is a health care clinic in Johnson Bayou, where the community came together to put this in place to create access for health care.

You know, we all talk about how all politics is local, but I would submit that all health care is local. If we don't have access to health care, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what's available in Boston, Massachusetts, or in San Francisco and New York, because if the folks down in Johnson Bayou don't have access to health care, then what good is it? What good is the great advance in Boston or the wonderful hospitals around the country if folks can't even enter into the health care system in their own community?

Access is critically important, and there are many, many things, many factors that affect access. I know this firsthand, as a cardiovascular surgeon before coming to Congress, that many rural communities don't have access because there aren't doctors in these rural communities, or there are no clinics in these rural communities.

We have a severe shortage of physicians nationwide right now, and there are many reasons we have shortages. I have asked for a GAO study in the past on this and tried to pass an amendment in the higher education bill last year to look at why we have these shortages. Clearly there are a number of factors, and we need to correct those deficiencies to get a sufficient physician workforce to fill our rural communities and provide access.

There are cost issues that limit access, cost for families, where they can't afford health insurance. There are costs, actually, reimbursement factors for physicians which do not provide adequate incentives for physicians and nurses to be in rural communities. We have a severe shortage of nurses. All health care is local, and we have to remember that if we are going to reform the health care system.

The United States has one of the best health care systems in the world, and

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we spend significantly more on health care than any other nation. Health care costs have doubled between 1993 and 2004, growing to nearly \$2 trillion annually.

In addition to this, malpractice premiums have continued to skyrocket. Physicians premiums rose 15 percent between 2000 and 2002, and as much as 33 percent for some specialties. Many physicians are basically retiring early from their practices because of the severe costs imposed by malpractice premiums.

Some of my Democratic colleagues and some of the presidential hopefuls have lately been advocating a government-run universal health care program, saying that this is the only way we can have universal coverage. But I will tell you this, and I know this as a physician, that universal coverage does not equate to access. Coverage is one thing, but if you don't have the facilities, you don't have the physicians, you don't have the nurses, you don't have the clinic or you can't afford insurance, or you can't find access, it doesn't matter about the coverage. It's access that's important.

Now, one of the things that Congress is looking at is the SCHIP bill. One of the things that SCHIP fails to recognize is that the measure fails to take into account that children's health, separated from the parents' health coverage, is not going to be good enough. Again, it's access.

I think we have to have three principles, information, choice and control in health care. In a subsequent speech, I will get into more of those things.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 38 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KANJORSKI) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

At worship this weekend, Lord, Your people heard this admonition from the sacred scriptures:

"First of all, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be offered for all peoples, especially for rulers and those in positions of authority; that we may be able to lead undisturbed and tranquil lives, with solid piety and true dignity."

Lord, by Your grace, even in our prayer, You lead us beyond self-concern to embrace the needs of others.

As a priority, Lord, help us to pray with sincerity for lawmakers in this Congress and around the world. Their decisions and their indifference has a ripple effect upon other nations. Guide them, that Your people everywhere may live in security and flourish with human ingenuity, 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 his approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. POE 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.

HATEMONGER SPEAKS AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the University of Hate has a new branch campus and it is called Columbia University.

Madman, maniac, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is speaking today at Columbia. The Iranian President believes in the murder of the Jewish people in Israel. He is a hater of Americans. He is sending money, arms, and ammunition to Iraq that is used to kill American troops. Not the kind of person that deserves a U.S. audience.

But Columbia doesn't care. The University said that they would have even invited warmonger Hitler to speak on their campus.

But the university does have some people that they refuse to allow on campus. This is the same university that, in 1969 during the Vietnam War and peacenik movement, banned the ROTC from campus. And in spite of current law and a Supreme Court ruling, still bans the ROTC.

Columbia University clearly shows a pattern of being anti-American by promoting forums to warmongers and by preventing the U.S. military ROTC program on campus. Maybe the university should just relocate to Tehran. And in the meantime, the U.S. taxpayers have no business sending American money to the University of Hate.

And that's just the way it is.

AHMADINEJAD AND COLUMBIA

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, you know, there is quite a bit of disgust with what is taking place in New York City today with Ahmadinejad at Columbia University. There is disgust also with the United Nations. And rightfully so. And we are hearing from our constituents about this.

And then to top it off, the New York Times, who for 2 weeks denied that they gave special price breaks to moveon.org for the liberal group's ad attacking General Petraeus, finally yesterday through their public editor or their ombudsman had to come clean with the truth.

Yes, indeed, moveon.org should have paid \$142,000 for that ad, but somehow it was cut in half. The reduced price was a mistake, they said, and they admitted they had violated their own advertising policy of barring attacks of a personal nature. Two pretty glaring mistakes, don't you think?

The Times claims it is not a poster child for the liberal media, but in the recent admission that sometimes reporters had fabricated stories while management cut a deal to a liberal attack group and violated their own ethics, well, as my grandmother would say, their little actions sure are speaking a lot louder than their words. Bless their little hearts.

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, September 21, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM 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 September 21, 2007, at 11:25 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3580.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.