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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:
Lord God, You alone can trace the deepest fault lines of history and read the highest aspirations of the human heart.

We pray You, O Lord, to be with the Members of the House of Representatives today. Give them sound judgment and make them as practical and "street wise" as the American people who sent them here as their representatives.

Help them to withstand open criticism when they know what is right before You and conscience. Often they are characterized by half-truths and attributed motives that are far beneath them. Uphold them at such times, with personal integrity and compassion for those most in need. Having called them to serve others to the best of their ability, lift them even higher by Your grace and power to live and work for the greater glory of God, both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. RICHARDSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. RICHARDSON 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 will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

FUNDING FOR SCHIP VERSUS FUNDING FOR IRAQ

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, yesterday this House made the historic step of reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP, so we can give 10 million low-income children health care. This plan not only ensures current enrollees do not lose coverage, but it will help cover 3 million additional children in low-income families who are currently eligible for the program but not yet enrolled.

Unfortunately, President Bush has threatened to veto the bill over and over. He instead supports his own plan which would actually result in thousands of low-income kids losing their health care coverage, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

It is also important to mention that the plan we passed is fully paid for. This is in stark contrast to the over \$400 billion that the President has already asked the taxpayers to spend in Iraq. In fact, for the cost of just over 3 months in Iraq, we could insure these 10 million children for 5 years without adding to our Nation's debt.

Madam Speaker, it is time for the President to reconsider his ill-advised veto threat and pledge to protect health coverage for America's children in need.

EARMARK IN SCHIP BILL

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed a SCHIP bill that makes a mockery of the earmark rules. An already seriously flawed bill got worse when it became clear that we would be voting on a bill that had been given a sham earmark certification. Quite simply, this bill contained an earmark, despite receiving the earmark-free designation by the House Rules Committee.

The House rules are clear. If a bill has earmarks, it must be identified accordingly. But, somehow, the Democrat majority shoehorned money for specific health care facilities into yesterday's SCHIP legislation and slipped it through committee.

I don't doubt there are medical facilities that need funding, but not funding that bends the rules. Are the American people supposed to take proclamations about new ethical standards seriously? If anything, we are witnessing a new atmosphere of hypocrisy, a charade of openness that veils a status quo rife with secret earmark spending.

This is not the way this House should do business. Let's get back to doing business the way the American people want, without secret earmark spending and with accountability for every dollar in every piece of legislation.

SCHIP

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this House passed a conference committee report on SCHIP that will give health care for over 4 million children, something we long should have done.

Forty Members of the Republican Party joined with us, but many Members of the Republican Party, just like the previous speaker, sensed that something was wrong with the bill because it was, quote-unquote, an earmark. That alleged earmark, not really

□ 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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an earmark, was in my district. It says that the States of Mississippi and Arkansas can pay for the health care that their people receive at the Charity Hospital in the City of Memphis, Tennessee that is losing \$20 million a year and more treating people from Mississippi and Arkansas who are indigent.

That is not an earmark. That is allowing a State the option to pay for care received by their citizens that they otherwise wouldn't receive and that another county taxpayer group or city people are paying for. It is equity. It is long due. It wasn't an earmark. And I hope my colleagues will refrain from continuing to refer to this in such a way. It is a calumny that shouldn't be repeated on this House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I thank this House for passing that conference committee report and correcting an inequity in health care.

CIRCULAR FUNDRAISING

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, among the many downsides of earmarking and one that we rarely talk about on the House floor is the practice of circular fundraising. Campaign donations are given to Members, Members secure earmarks benefiting their contributors, and contributors in turn are able to give Members more donations. This cycle is repeated over and over and over.

Unfortunately, this is a bipartisan practice. The media has reported on many such arrangements for Members on both sides of the aisle. Legal issues aside, circular fundraising does not pass the smell test.

Whether it is fair or not, the crimes of a few of our former colleagues have cast suspicion over us all. Continued rampant fundraising is simply not worth the trust it costs us with our constituents. I think that most of us had higher aspirations when we came here than groveling for crumbs that fall from the appropriators' table. I hope that we as Members of Congress will finally decide that enough is enough.

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS

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

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Congress has a strong record of delivering our promises, real meaningful change, fiscally responsible ways, and instituting a pay-as-you-go policy and doing it in a deficit reduction, disciplined way.

Our Democratic Congress, the majority that we have, has passed three significant things:

Number one, we passed legislation last month that instituted the 9/11 Commission recommendations that would improve communications with first responders and would ensure 100

percent screening of airline and sea-borne cargo.

Number two, we established historic energy independence that would reduce our Nation's dependency on foreign oil.

And, number three, this Democratic House, we have made sure to invest in over 3,000 new Border Patrol agents as well as 50,000 new police officers.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few examples of how our Democratic Congress majority has taken America in a new direction.

GIVE ILLEGALS A PACKAGE

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, two delivery services, UPS and FedEx, take a package and deliver it for a customer anywhere in a world in just a handful of days. Amazingly, a customer can even track one of those 23 million packages on the Internet and know exactly where it is on any given day. Maybe the Federal Government could learn something here.

The Federal Government doesn't seem to even know where 20 million illegals are in this country, much less track their whereabouts. A good example of how private industry works and the Federal Government does not.

Anyway, it has been suggested that the way to solve the case of the missing illegals is to give every illegal that crosses into the United States a FedEx or UPS package. The package could contain items for their stay illegally in the United States. Then we could record when people enter the U.S. and know where they are at any given time.

Mr. Speaker, it is a disgrace that the Federal Government can't handle border security any better than it does. The Feds owe it to the American citizens to come up with ways to stop the flow of illegals into the United States.

And that's just the way it is.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS ARE MEETING AMERICA'S PRIORITIES IN A FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MANNER

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, the new Democratic Congress is taking our Nation in a new direction by putting the needs of the American people first and making long delayed investments in our future.

Over the summer, the House passed every single one of its appropriations bills for the upcoming year. Our appropriation priorities will better protect the Nation against terrorism by including 3,500 more firefighting grants and better protect our neighborhoods against violent crime by investing in 12,000 new police officers.

We also invest in community health centers so that they can provide essential health care services to more than 1

million additional Americans. We beefed up cancer and other lifesaving medical research so that we can continue to look for cures for these devastating diseases.

And we make the largest investment in veterans health care funding in the history of the Veterans Administration, ensuring that our veterans get the health care they are entitled to.

Mr. Speaker, we once again invest in priorities that were neglected by the old Republican Congress, and we do it in a fiscally responsible way following pay-as-you-go policies that will lead us to no new deficit spending.

□ 1015

GREATER FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to promote the congressional duty to be good stewards of the American taxpayers' money. The American people deserve government that is transparent and open when spending money.

Republicans enjoyed a tremendous victory for American families earlier this year when we passed a smart earmark reform policy for spending bills. But we need to ensure that earmarks put in all legislation receive the same amount of scrutiny. That is why I call on Members of this Chamber to join over 160 of our colleagues in signing a discharge petition to force a vote on a resolution that will enforce an open and honest earmark policy on all legislation that comes before this body.

I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join us in standing up for the American taxpayer.

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

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, at long last, after months of debate, negotiation and compromise, the House and the Senate have come to agreement on a children's health reauthorization that's going to extend health care coverage to 10 million children in this country. And last night, I'm proud to be 1 of 265 Members of this House that supported that legislation and voted to send that bill to the President.

This is bipartisan legislation. We have agreement with both the House and the Senate, but unfortunately, the House does not have the votes to override the veto at this time.

I'm asking my Republican colleagues, please consider the 10 million children that are going to lose access to health care coverage if this bill is not passed, if the veto is not overridden. We must override this veto.