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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 THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 1, 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 Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

EFFECTIVE JOB TRAINING FOR OUR RETURNING WARRIORS

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, when our soldiers come home from combat, they often face an uphill battle. For many servicemembers, the transition from active duty to veteran status and returning to a full, meaningful civilian life is daunting, fraught with many challenging obstacles and bureaucratic barriers. Many times, these brave service men and women require job training but for entirely new careers.

Although statistics show that eventually veterans in general enjoy a favorable rate in the Nation's job market, many veterans obviously find it difficult to compete successfully in the labor market. That is why for over a decade the Federal Government has provided job training benefits to veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor. The mission statement for the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service, VETS program, is to "provide veterans and transitioning servicemembers with the resources and services to succeed in the 21st century workplace by maximizing their employment opportunities, protecting their employment rights, and meeting labor market demands with qualified veterans today."

Additionally, the Department of Labor offers servicemembers leaving the military with a service-connected disability the Disability Transition Assistance Program, DTAP. DTAP includes a 3-day workshop plus additional hours of individual instruction to help determine job readiness and address the special needs of disabled veterans. However, this is the identical DTAP program offered to all transitioning disabled veterans across this country. This 3-day program is valuable support, but it only provides general employment information and at no time addresses the specific needs of the community in which the veteran lives. Unfortunately, this means that frequently there is a void of information on local labor market conditions that result in veterans using their benefits to train for jobs that do not exist in their community.

Mr. Jeffrey Askew is director of the Marion County Veterans' Service Center in my hometown of Ocala, Florida. He said many veterans have used their Federal job training benefit for information technology (IT) career training. However, Ocala has little demand for

IT professionals, and veterans are often advised to move to Orlando where there are many more opportunities for them. Upon finally getting settled back into civilian life, it is frustrating and unfortunate to say the least to be forced to uproot one more time and move your family to an unknown city.

I am concerned about this problem, but I think and I believe that there is an easy solution. That is why I introduced legislation to provide better information to veterans on their local job market needs.

H.R. 3646, the Veterans Effective Training Job Opportunities and Benefits Act of 2007, or VET JOBS Act of 2007, directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Labor to conduct a joint study on the greatest employment needs in various job markets around the country and post these results on the VA Web site. These results would then be updated annually to reflect the current and possibly changing needs in the local job market. With this tool, a veteran could plug in his or her zip code and see a list of the occupations that are most in demand, and subsequently use their Federal job training most effectively.

The Department of Labor already has the infrastructure in place for this kind of research, so this is a practical, low-cost solution. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office has unofficially scored this proposal as having insignificant costs, insignificant costs for immeasurable benefits to our veterans.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in this effort. Help our veterans today. Help them with their quality employment. Help them to find out where the jobs that they wish to be trained for are located, and support the VET JOBS Act that I ask for all of my colleagues to cosponsor.

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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H11031

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 35 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 (Ms. CASTOR) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord God Almighty, before the majesty of Your creation and the power of Your will, we humbly stand and present ourselves to You.

We are a people who love freedom. We have proven creative in our work and appear prosperous in the eyes of the world. Yet we are made of the same clay as all others.

Help us to find common cause with others and be proven true to noble purpose in Your sight.

Show us how to use our bountiful blessings, to attain true leadership in the world and a model for others. Thus may we be Your instrument for achieving lasting peace and justice in troublesome times.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore 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.

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:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, DC,
September 28, 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 Representa-

tives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on September 28, 2007, at 9:15 am:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 327.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.J. Res 43.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.J. Res 52.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3625.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3668.

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 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bills and joint resolutions were signed by the Speaker on Friday, September 28, 2007:

H.R. 976, to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes

H.R. 3625, to make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency

H.R. 3668, to provide for the extension of Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA), the Abstinence Education Program, and the Qualifying Individuals (QI) Program, and for other purposes

H.J. Res. 43, increasing the statutory limit on the public debt

H.J. Res. 52, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1431

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota) at 2 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

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.

COMMENDING THE WINGS OVER HOUSTON AIRSHOW

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 691) commending the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field. The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 691

Whereas for 23 years the all-volunteer Gulf Coast Wing and West Houston Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force has performed in the Wings Over Houston Airshow at Ellington Field in Houston, Texas;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow has been rated as one of the top events of its kind in the Nation;

Whereas tens of thousands of people from southeast Texas and all over the United States attend the event each year and experience the unique opportunity to see the United States Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard perform and to meet service members of the past and present;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow has helped to increase awareness and appreciation for the United States Armed Forces and its active duty members and veterans;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow serves to promote an understanding and appreciation of military history through the reenactment of battles and the acquisition, restoration, and display of vintage aircraft;

Whereas throughout its history, Wings Over Houston Airshow has benefited local and national charities, including the Wings Over Houston Airshow Scholarship Program, the Texas Southern University Aviation Career Academy, the Exchange Club of Sugar Land, and the Commemorative Air Force aircraft restoration and flying historical programs;

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Airshow and its partners, including the Lone Star Flight Museum, the Houston Airport System, the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, the Bay Area Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Destination League City, and the cities of Houston, Kemah, Nassau Bay, Seabrook, and Webster, have contributed to the economy and growth of southeast Texas; and

Whereas the Wings Over Houston Scholarship Program has promoted the importance of math and science education by helping southeast Texas students pursue college educations in the fields of aviation and aerospace: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives commends the Wings Over Houston Airshow for its great contribution to the appreciation, understanding, and future of the United States Armed Forces, the City of Houston, Texas, and Ellington Field.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) each will control 20 minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.