

Welch (VT) Weller Wilson (OH)
Weldon (FL) Whitfield Woolsey

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining on this vote.

□ 1910

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I would like to submit this statement for the RECORD and regret that I was not present to vote on rollcall vote Nos. 961, 962, and 963. Had I been present, I would have voted:

“Yea” on rollcall vote No. 961 on H. Res. 738 expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the Government of Syria’s continued interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon; “yea” on rollcall vote No. 962 on H.R. 2089, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 Loyola Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana, as the “Louisiana Armed Services Veterans Post Office”; and “yea” on rollcall vote No. 963 on H.R. 20, to provide for research on, and services for individuals with, postpartum depression and psychosis.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 106 AND H. RES. 610

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I be removed as a cosponsor from H. Res. 106 and H. Res. 610.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 106

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor from H. Res. 106.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 106

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H. Res. 106.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 106

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for my name to be removed as a cosponsor of H. Res. 106.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 106

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor for H. Res. 106.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 106

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H. Res. 106.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 106

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of H. Res. 106.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the rules of the House do not allow me to remove myself from cosponsor at this time of H.R. 811, but this statement serves that I am not to be perceived as a cosponsor of this bill at this time.

OVERRIDING THE VETO ON SCHIP

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in a little less than 72 hours, this House will have the opportunity to make one of the most definitive and powerful stands for the Nation’s children.

Let me go on record by indicating that this Nation has over a period of time mistreated her children. Now we have the opportunity to insure millions of children with health coverage through the SCHIP program, a program now that has seen itself last for a decade of success in preventing devastating health conditions for young children.

I know this because just last week I visited St. Joseph’s Hospital, the neonatal unit. We heard stories from young mothers talk about children who have been saved and, yes, talk about those who have not been saved because they could not enroll in the SCHIP program.

Why in the world would we suffer a veto to deny our children a mere \$35 billion to cover them for preventative health care?

I ask my colleagues to overturn this veto, and I join the Congressional Black Caucus to ensure that that happens. The fight is for our children. We cannot yield.

□ 1915

GOD & CENSORSHIP

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, good news. That which has been removed has been returned. That which has been censored is censored no more. Let me explain.

The Architect of the Capitol took it upon himself to remove references of God from the official certificates that accompany flags that are flown over the Capitol. These flags and certificates are given to schools, citizens, and the military. Some Members of Congress, for example, request the words “God” and “Country” to be incorporated into the certificate. However, the word “God” was unilaterally stricken and censored from the document by the Architect. But those days are over. The Architect will now allow the word “God” on such certificates.

The national motto is “In God We Trust.” We pledge allegiance saying “one Nation under God.” Our history is based upon a belief in the Supreme Being. And much of this Capitol has references to the Almighty.

Mr. Speaker, many Americans are tired of paranoia government censorship of God, and consider attempts to remove God from America a violation of their constitutional rights. Thank God.

And that’s just the way it is.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

IRAQ WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, Members, last Friday, Retired Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, who led U.S. forces in Iraq following the invasion in

2003, became the latest in a growing list of retired military officers who harshly criticize the war in Iraq. He said that the United States is "living a nightmare with no end in sight." General Sanchez also lambasted the latest strategy in Iraq calling it, again, "a desperate attempt by the administration that has not accepted the political and economic realities of this war."

These startling revelations from the highest ranks of our military should shake us to our very core. The man who was personally responsible for conducting the war in Iraq is trying to convince us that we should have no faith in the administration now waging the war.

General Sanchez went on to say, "There has been a glaring unfortunate display of incompetent strategic leadership within our national leaders," and that "the American people must hold them accountable."

But, General Sanchez, how can the American people hold their elected officials accountable? As we all know, they can make a lot of noise by calling congressional offices, writing letters, and attending marches; but at the end of the day, the American people hold their elected officials accountable at the ballot box.

To my colleagues in the House of Representatives, our constituents have already made up their minds. An overwhelming majority of people think it was a mistake to invade Iraq and believe that setting a timetable for withdrawal is the correct course of action. Most Democrats and Republicans agree that an open-ended occupation of Iraq is an awful idea. But the Iraqi people don't want us there, and we have no timetable for withdrawal.

What do we have if not an open-ended occupation? What more do we need to learn before deciding that this war must be brought to a halt? Day after day, the grim realities unfolding in Iraq paint a picture of futility and mismanagement. More lives are lost, more money is squandered, and Iraq falls deeper and deeper into chaos and civil war.

President Bush has had our military in pursuit of a victory that is perpetually "just around the corner." Well, we have been around the corner and back again. There is no victory to be found. The time to end this debacle has long since passed. The United States military presence has reinforced in the minds of the Iraqis the most damaging lesson an emerging nation can learn: that problems are solved with bullets and bombs instead of compromise and cooperation. Instead of encouraging compromise and fostering cooperation among the various warring tribes, we have done the exact opposite. We continue to spend billions of dollars blindly arming Iraqis who volunteer to serve in the Iraqi security forces with no thought as to where their loyalties might lie when we hand them weapons.

On one hand, as Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and Inter-

national Studies points out, we have not addressed the degree to which all elements of the Iraqi security forces, from the Prime Minister's office down, have links to Shiite efforts to retain and expand power and carry out sectarian cleansing in mixed areas.

On the other hand, the bottom-up reconciliation that Bush brags about is arming and empowering the Sunni militias in Anbar province and elsewhere. This is, as a recent article in the Economist suggests, a recipe for civil war and only serves to undermine the central government of Iraq.

These irresponsible and dangerous tactics not only harm future prospects for stability in Iraq, but seriously erode our standing in the Middle East and larger international community.

I would like to commend General Sanchez for speaking out against the Bush administration. But how many more General Sanchezes will it take before the last Congressperson turns against the occupation of Iraq? How many more investigations of Blackwater's abuse, of Halliburton's fraud, how many more reports of our overstretched military at its breaking point, or about the damage our occupation is doing to our international standing? How much more of this debate do we need before our national leaders accept that the Iraq war is actually making our country less safe?

For the good of this great Nation and for the good of Iraq, it is time to bring our troops home and end the occupation of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I know that there is an attempt to put a good face on the surge and to try and make us believe that the surge is working, but just read your newspapers every day and see the number of lives that are being lost, not only of our own soldiers, but of the Iraqis.

CORPORAL DONALD E. VALENTINE III—U.S. ARMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, "The soldier is the Army, and wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. While we mourn those men who die, we should thank God such men ever lived." These are the words of General George Patton in World War II.

Mr. Speaker, one of those soldiers was Corporal Donald E. Valentine III of the United States Army. He was born in Houston, Texas, on March 5, 1986. Donald Valentine joined the United States Army because of the 9/11 attack on this country.

His mother Anna said, "My husband and I were behind Donald 100 percent. I was so proud of him no matter what he ever did. He made me very proud to be his mother." Words from another of America's Gold Star Mothers.

I met Anna Valentine and many members of the Valentine family re-

cently at Veterans National Cemetery in Houston, where mothers like Anna who had children killed in Iraq and Afghanistan were being honored. We call those noble women Gold Star Mothers. Anna Valentine's son is buried on that hallowed ground of the fallen in Houston, Texas.

Corporal Valentine was killed along with two other soldiers on September 18 in Muqdadiyah, Iraq, when an IED, an improvised explosive device, detonated near him.

Mr. Speaker, you understand the use of an IED by America's enemy is a coward's way of fighting the war. These enemies rant and rave and preach hate in the name of religion, but they cover their faces with masks and hide in caves and dark, dusty ditches. They are afraid to come out in the open and face the American soldier, so our enemy detonates remote-controlled bombs.

Corporal Donald Valentine III comes from a military family. His father, Donald II, is a Navy veteran. His brother Daniel wanted to enlist to be with his brother Donald in Iraq, and Daniel, 19, still intends to join the military. Mr. Speaker, America owes much to families like the Valentines.

Donald was married 1 year to Lucia, who said Donald had all the qualities any girl would want. She had talked to Donald on their first anniversary, 3 days before his death in Iraq. Corporal Valentine told his family that, if he did not survive the war, they should stay strong. He is the 91st fallen servicemember with ties to the Houston area to have been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Corporal Donald Valentine was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team from Fort Lewis, Washington.

Being from a military family, he moved around a lot as a child. He lived in Florida most of his life and in Idaho, but wanted to be buried in "Big H," as he called Houston, Texas, because of many reasons. One of those reasons was because he spent so much time growing up with his grandparents who live in Houston. Mr. Speaker, Donald's grandparents, Thomas and Lupe Cortez, and his other grandmother Geneva Fernandez, survive their grandson.

As a grandfather of five with two more grandkids on the way, I think it would be a most difficult task to bury a grandson in the vigor of their youth.

In the official statement on Donald's death, the family said, "Donald touched the lives of so many with his big heart. We will cherish the beautiful memories we shared with you. You made us so very proud. Now heaven has another hero. And, continue to watch over us as an angel in heaven."

On September 28, 2007, taps played for the last time as 21 guns saluted this American soldier. This is a photograph of Donald Valentine III.

A statement has been credited to one of Rome's centurions when he told his