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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MORAN of Virginia) at noon.

PRAYER

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

This Nation is still in mourning for President Gerald Ford. Today, as the House of Representatives pays tribute to him, we pray to You, Lord God, paraphrasing his own remarks in 1974 on taking the oath of office as President:

"We believe that truth is the glue that holds government together, not only our government but civilization itself. That bond is unbroken at home and abroad.

"In all our public and private acts as Members of Congress, we expect to follow our instincts of openness and candor with full confidence that honesty is always the best policy in the end.

"As we bind up internal wounds, let us restore the golden rule to our political process and let mutual love purge our hearts of suspicion and of hate."

At the beginning of the 110th Congress, we ask the people of this Nation for their prayers. With all the strength and all the good sense we have gained from life, with all the confidence our family, our friends and dedicated staff impart to us and with the good will of countless Americans we have encountered, we now solemnly reaffirm our promise to uphold the Constitution, to do what is right as God gives us to see the right, and to do the very best we can for America.

"God helping us, we will not let you down."

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 gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced

that the Senate has agreed to the Following Resolution:

S. RES. 19

Whereas Gerald Rudolph Ford, the 38th President of the United States, was born on July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska;

Whereas Gerald Ford was raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he was active in the Boy Scouts, achieving the Eagle Scout rank, and where he excelled as both a student and an athlete during high school;

Whereas after graduating from high school, Gerald Ford attended the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, where he played on the university's national championship football teams in 1932 and 1933, and was honored as the team's most valuable player in 1934, before graduating with a B.A. degree in 1935;

Whereas Gerald Ford later attended Yale Law School and earned an LL.B. degree in 1941, after which he began to practice law in Grand Rapids;

Whereas Gerald Ford joined the United States Naval Reserve in 1942 and served his country honorably during World War II;

Whereas upon returning from his service in the military, Gerald Ford ran for the United States House of Representatives and was elected to Congress;

Whereas Gerald Ford served in the House of Representatives from January 1949 to December 1973, winning reelection 12 times, each time with more than 60 percent of the vote;

Whereas Gerald Ford served with great distinction in Congress, in particular through his service on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, of which he rose to become ranking member in 1961;

Whereas in addition to his work in the House of Representatives, Gerald Ford served as a member of the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy;

Whereas in 1965, Gerald Ford was selected as minority leader of the House of Representatives, a position he held for 8 years;

Whereas after the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1973, Gerald Ford was chosen by President Richard Nixon to serve as Vice President of the United States;

Whereas following the resignation of President Nixon, Gerald Ford took the oath of office as President of the United States on August 9, 1974;

Whereas upon assuming the presidency, Gerald Ford helped the nation heal from one of the most difficult and contentious periods in United States history, and restored public confidence in the country's leaders;

Whereas Gerald Ford's basic human decency, his integrity, and his ability to work cooperatively with leaders of all political parties and ideologies, earned him the respect and admiration of Americans throughout the country;

Whereas the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 recommended that America's next nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, designated as CVN-78, be named as the U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford, in honor of our 38th President; and

Whereas Gerald Ford was able to serve his country with such great distinction in large part because of the continuing support of his widely admired wife, Elizabeth (Betty), who also has contributed much to the nation in many ways, and of their 4 children, Michael, John, Steven, and Susan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate notes with deep sorrow and solemn mourning the death of President Gerald Rudolph Ford.

Resolved, That the Senate extends its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Ford and the family of President Ford.

Resolved, That the Senate honors and, on behalf of the nation, expresses deep apprecia-

tion for President Ford's outstanding and important service to his country.

Resolved, That the Senate directs the Secretary of the Senate to communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the former President.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 197. An act to authorize salary adjustments for justices and judges of the United States for fiscal year 2007.

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the sad truth is that we have an epidemic of working poor in this country. These are Americans who work 40 to 60 hours a week and sometimes 7 days a week, yet can't afford the basic necessities. At \$5.15 per hour, a full-time minimum wage worker makes less than \$11,000 a year, which is less than most of us make in a month. These aren't just teenagers working part time. Most minimum-wage workers are actually hardworking disadvantaged adults. Each day these working poor are faced with the impossible decision of having to choose between food, clothing, shelter, medicine and utility bills. No American who works hard for a living should have to make those types of choices. We cannot continue to look away while hardworking Americans linger in poverty. This isn't just an economic issue, it is an ethical and moral issue.

I commend the Democratic leadership for their dedication to this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support this raise for the millions of Americans who deserve it.

MEXICO GOES HIGH-TECH ON ILLEGAL ENTRY

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Mexican illegals looking to breach entry into the United States are receiving encouraging help from their own government. In the past, the Mexican government has provided pamphlets to illegals on how to sneak into the United States. Now the Mexican government has announced it is going high tech. The government will provide illegals with GPS tracking devices, allowing them to call on the U.S. Cavalry, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, if they get lost among the treacherous rivers and deserts lining the U.S.-Mexico border.

By passing out GPS devices free of charge, Mexico wants the U.S. to rescue illegals that are in trouble on American soil and provide them free medical attention but supposedly let them still stay in the United States. Instead of discouraging Mexican citizens from illegally entering America,

Mexico is asking the U.S. to cooperate, ignore the invasion and then provide aid to stranded illegals.

Mr. Speaker, this is absurd. Our Federal Government's loyalties lie with the American people, not with illegals that are colonizing America. The U.S. must stand firm against the Mexican government's unlawful, illegal invasion into our homeland.

And that's just the way it is.

THE KUCINICH PLAN FOR EXIT FROM IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, there is a compelling need for a new direction in Iraq, one that recognizes the plight of the people of Iraq, the false and illegal basis of the United States' war against Iraq, the realities on the ground which make a military resolution of the conflict unrealistic, and the urgent responsibility of the United States to use the process of diplomacy and international law to achieve stability in Iraq.

Today, I am presenting to Congress what is called the Kucinich Plan for Exit from Iraq. These are some of the elements:

1. The U.S. announces it will end the occupation, close military bases and withdraw.
2. The U.S. announces it will use existing funds to bring the troops and necessary equipment home.
3. Order a simultaneous return of all U.S. contractors to the U.S. and turn over all contracting work to the Iraqi government.
4. Convene a regional conference for the purpose of developing a security and stabilization force for Iraq.
5. Prepare an international security and peacekeeping force to move in, replacing U.S. troops who then return home.
6. Develop and fund a process of national reconciliation.
7. Reconstruction and jobs.
8. Reparations.
9. Political sovereignty.
10. Dealing with the Iraq economy.
11. Economic sovereignty for Iraq.
12. A process of international truth and reconciliation between the people of the United States and the people of Iraq.

It is time for a new direction, and the Kucinich plan offers that direction.

PAYGO AND EARMARK REFORM

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss fiscal responsibility and earmark reform. I have spent my entire political career fighting to reduce wasteful spending so Americans can keep more of their hard-earned money.

In the 109th Congress, I voted for H. Res. 1000 which provided for earmark

reform by requiring full disclosure of earmarks on funding, authorization and revenue legislation so Members and the public will be able to easily identify projects which otherwise may be inappropriately hidden from adequate scrutiny in a timely manner.

Earmark reform is important to providing accountability of government spending. It is truly disappointing and a shame that the Democrat leadership coupled it with the fiscally irresponsible policy of PAYGO, which forced many of us to vote "no." PAYGO is based on tenuous economic projections, is unreliable and, simply put, will make it easier to raise taxes and more difficult to give taxpayers back their money.

I voted for the Republican motion to commit which included the earmark reform and excluded PAYGO. Unfortunately, the Republican motion did not succeed, and we now face fiscal policies where government can spend more and continually raise taxes on the American taxpayer.

INTEROPERABLE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, in its final report, the 9/11 Commission concluded, and I quote:

"The inability to communicate was a critical element of the World Trade Center, Pentagon and Somerset County, Pennsylvania, crash sites where multiple agencies and multiple jurisdictions responded. The occurrence of this problem at three very different sites is strong evidence that compatible and adequate communications among public safety organizations at the local, State and Federal levels remains an important problem. Federal funding of such interagency communication units should be given high priority."

The lack of interoperability among first responders has plagued our Nation for too long. Today Congress is taking an important step to give our first responders the tools they need to do their jobs and keep our Nation safe.

The fact is that, since September 11, the Republican administration and Congress failed to make adequate investments in interoperable communications for our police, firefighters and EMTs. After September 11, President Bush said, "We want to spend money to make sure equipment is there, strategies are there, communications are there to make sure that you have whatever it takes to respond." Yet under President Bush and the Republican-led Congress, the money was not allocated, the equipment was not there, strategies were incomplete and first responders still could not communicate across agencies and jurisdictions.

Today, Congress will consider the Implementing the 9/11 Commission Rec-

ommendations Act which will create a stand-alone grant program for interoperable communications. Today, the Democratic Congress starts a new direction for public safety and to keep America safe.

CAPTAIN HAYES CLAYTON

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of Captain Hayes Clayton, a heroic member of our military who was killed in action on Christmas day in Balad, Iraq.

Captain Clayton was a classmate of my daughter, Laura Neil. She remembers his strength of character. Others have remembered his strength of faith. Indeed, Captain Clayton leaves behind a legacy of living by the highest moral principles.

Before enlisting in the Army, Captain Clayton was known as a standout defensive end on the football team at Marietta High School and a skilled Army ROTC member at Fort Valley State University in Georgia.

Captain Clayton leaves behind his parents, Reverend Hayes and Marlena Clayton, his brothers Eric and Michael, his loving wife Army First Lieutenant Monica Clayton, and a precious 4-month-old son, Hayes, III, who proudly carries on his father's name.

Mr. Speaker, my prayers go out to his family and my deepest gratitude goes out for his selfless and deep sacrifice for our Nation. I ask you to join me in honoring the distinguished memory of Captain Hayes Clayton.

BETTER SECURING OUR NATION BY PASSING THE 9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, securing the safety of the American people is our number one priority as elected officials. To do this we must look at all facets of homeland security and take all necessary precautions seriously. Democrats have pledged to address the matter of homeland security comprehensively by implementing the recommendations of the independent, bipartisan 9/11 Commission. Of their 41 recommendations made over 2 years ago, many have been only partially implemented and others have not been implemented at all.

Because of this delay in addressing the Commission's recommendations, we still have major holes in our homeland security system. More than 5 years after 9/11, only 5 percent of containers entering U.S. ports are screened. In addition, most air cargo is not screened at all, and our first responders are still unable to communicate with each other during an emergency.