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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Kenn Hucks, Pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lebanon, Tennessee, offered the following prayer:

Our Father, we offer to You our greatest praise and thanksgiving for another day to serve You and our fellow man. Thank You for the grace and blessing to live in this great land.

Grant to every American in this great assembly a craving for Your wisdom, the courage to express it, and the commitment to never turn away from what is right.

Bring true and lasting peace to our world. Allow spiritual renewal to sweep our great land, and help us to truly become one Nation under God that is indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Help each of us to humble ourselves under Your mighty hand and truly love our neighbor as our self.

Protect our Armed Forces, prosper our workforce, and prescribe the path of Your will for all of America and for every American. In our Savior's name, 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 gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HILL 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.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND KENN HUCKS

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

Mr. COOPER. Madam Speaker, we were privileged today to have deliver our opening prayer the Reverend Kenn Hucks from Lebanon, Tennessee, Immanuel Baptist Church, formerly in BART GORDON's district, and now in my district. We are also privileged to have his beautiful wife Kim with us today sitting in the family gallery.

This is a church that started in 1947 with just a few dozen members, and now it is in the top 1 percent of the Tennessee Baptist and the Southern Baptist Conventions, due to a long line of inspirational pastors, the latest of whom is Kenn Hucks, who joined the congregation, was called to the ministry in 2002. We appreciate his great spiritual leadership in our community, and we appreciate his being with us today.

BUSH BUDGET

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I would like to speak about the budget this morning and the concern that I have that the budget President Bush has proposed makes it very clear that his priorities are out of touch with everyday Americans. President Bush would rather maintain his tax cuts for the wealthiest in our communities, while leaving seniors, veterans and working families behind.

He also believes that his budget will rid our Nation of debt in 5 years, even though he wants to keep spending billions of dollars in Iraq and maintain these tax cuts for the most wealthy.

Further, President Bush continuously fails to be up front with the American people about the true cost of

the war. Even in the supplemental that he proposed, he fails to acknowledge the additional cost of the troops and support personnel that will be required by the troop surge. Folks, the numbers simply don't add up.

I am disappointed that the budget fails to include ample funding for the Everglades restoration and beach renourishment, which are an important asset and resource in our country. The Everglades and our beaches in Florida are not only important to Floridians, but also national treasures enjoyed by millions of Americans each year.

It is time for our government to step up to the plate and fulfill its commitment to the Everglades, our beaches, and all our other natural assets; I am going to fight to make this happen.

President Bush's priorities are out of step, and as we continue to debate his budget, I am confident Congress will restore funding to many of the programs our American families deserve and depend on.

ELIMINATING PREVENTABLE HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS

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

Mr. TIM MURPHY OF Pennsylvania. I would like to welcome my colleague from Pittsburgh in his first time in the Speaker's chair.

Mr. Speaker, more people die each year from infections they pick up in hospitals than from AIDS, breast cancer or auto accidents. The Centers for Disease Control reports these health care-associated infections contribute to 90,000 deaths per year, with annual costs exceeding \$50 billion. Medicare costs for patients who contract an infection while hospitalized is five times higher than for patients without these infections. For Medicaid patients, costs are 14 times higher.

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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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Many hospitals have dramatically reduced infection rates by implementing patient safety procedures. I will be introducing the Healthy Hospitals Act to provide financial incentives to hospitals for savings gained from eliminating these infections, and require public reporting of infections so health care providers and patients can work together to save lives and money. We need patient-centered health care that promotes patient choice, patient safety and patient care quality.

To learn more about eliminating preventable health care-associated infections, I invite my colleagues to visit my Web site at Murphy.house.gov.

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET CONTINUES TO SHORTCHANGE VETERANS AND MILITARY RETIREES

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation as a government to provide assistance to the men and women who have bravely served our Nation in our military; but once again, President Bush sent us a budget this week that significantly shortchanges veterans health care.

While our brave troops are fighting abroad as of right now, the President proposes a \$3.5 billion cut in veterans health care over the next 5 years. His budget also provides less than veteran service organizations say is needed to meet the growing needs of veterans, including the fact that we have a growing robust amount of veterans with the Iraq-Afghanistan war.

For the fifth year in a row, the budget raises health care costs on 1.3 million veterans, imposing \$4.9 million in increased copayments on prescription drugs, and new enrollment fees on veterans over the next 10 years.

The budget also increases TRICARE health care premiums for the Nation's military retirees, and includes several other changes in military health care that have been rejected by Congress in previous years.

If these proposals are not successful during the 2008 fiscal year, the budget for military health care will continue to be underfunded by at least \$1.8 billion.

Mr. Speaker, America's veterans deserve better, and they will get it from this Democratic House.

CAMERAS IN THE SUPREME COURT

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court is the most powerful Court in the world. These nine black-robed individuals rule on constitutional matters that affect all Americans for lifetimes. The third branch of government holds its session in public, as it ought to be.

The theory behind public court proceedings is that the more public and

open, the more likely they are to be fair. More courts throughout the vastness of America are expanding on this public trial concept by allowing unobtrusive cameras in the courtroom. This allows citizens to view court proceedings. When I was a judge in Texas, I allowed cameras to film criminal trials, including a capital murder case. I found that this enhanced the concept of a fair public trial.

Those that have never been a trial lawyer or a trial judge say that lawyers play to the cameras; but lawyers don't play to the cameras, they play to the jury or the court.

So open Supreme Court proceedings to cameras. Let America see what takes place. And to those judges who are opposed to this openness, maybe they shouldn't be doing what they do when the camera is not rolling.

And that's just the way it is.

KUCINICH 12-POINT PLAN FOR IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, we are sacrificing our entire domestic agenda for an illegal war in Iraq.

When you look at the President's budget, reductions in education and health care over a period of time will cause many necessary programs to be cut for the American people. Meanwhile, the White House is discussing whether or not to bring refugees from Iraq to the United States.

Now, think about it a minute. We are prosecuting an illegal war in Iraq, we are illegally occupying the country, we are building permanent bases in Iraq, and now we are talking about bringing refugees here. The real humanitarian thing to do would be to end the war by ending the occupation, closing the bases and bringing our troops home.

That is exactly what my 12-point plan would do. I reached it with the help of people from the international community, the U.N., people who have experience in peacekeeping. They say we can bring in an international security force once we get agreement from the countries in the region, and we can bring our troops home.

We have to stop this disaster in Iraq, bring our troops home, end the occupation.

CONGRESSIONAL INACTION JEOPARDIZES WALLOWA COUNTY ROADS, RESCUE SERVICES AND PILT

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

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, the failure of Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act amounts to another breach of faith to

more than 600 forested counties and 4,400 school districts across our great country.

For Wallowa County, Oregon, this means the road department and the sheriff search and rescue budgets will be slashed in half. There are more than 700 miles of roads in Wallowa County maintained by a current staff of 14. Soon only seven will try and keep up with this responsibility; that is one person for every 100 miles of road in Wallowa County. That is the same distance as between Washington, DC, and Richmond, Virginia. County Commissioner Mike Hayward says, "Impact to our roads and rescue services will put our citizens and visitors at risk."

Loss of the county payments program will also have a significant negative impact on more than 18 county governments across America whose Payment in Lieu of Taxes funds could be reduced by as much as 20 percent.

This Congress must keep the Federal Government's word to the people who live in timbered communities and pass H.R. 17. Time is running out for them.

BUSH SLASHING FUNDING TO EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS IN 2008 BUDGET

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, the President's budget serves as a blueprint as to what his priorities will be for the upcoming year.

At a time when our economy is becoming increasingly competitive, it is essential that we fully fund education programs across the board. Unfortunately, education is not prioritized in the President's budget.

Funding for No Child Left Behind remains about \$15 billion below the level promised when the bill was first signed into law in 2001. How can we hold our schools accountable when the President refuses to provide the funds needed to improve many of these schools?

The President finally makes good on a 6-year-old promise to increase the amount of money given to low-income students through the Pell Grant program, but it comes at a price. The President proposes recalling all Perkins loans and eliminating nine other higher education assistance programs.

At a time when college is becoming more out of reach for many Americans, we should be looking to strengthen all college assistance programs so more high school seniors have a chance to attend.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats, this one included, will once again make education a priority for our Nation's students.

AFGHANISTAN

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