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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:

Let the Nation be the land of promise and the citadel of freedom for the world. Let all the people rejoice to find the Lord their God in their midst.

It is not only our children who live with dreams and take delight in this season filled with blessing. Lord, all Your people look to Your visitation which takes away the dark days and fills them with light. Older and wiser, understanding, Your full embrace of our humanity, we seek deeper truth and lasting gifts.

Stir again within us the longing for family life secure in faithfulness. Give us brazen dignity in the work undertaken and achieved. Freed from the discontent of false expectations, bless us with the contentment that the reality of Your love reveals to us.

Let the feast begin when heaven and Earth are united in the song "A Child is born for us." "The Word becomes flesh." Divine presence is found in our midst.

Promises and oaths fulfilled, You prove Yourself our lasting hope, Lord. For You are the Lord our God and have become all in all, both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER). 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. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BOOZMAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 366. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the "Ernest Childers Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2135. An act to prohibit the recruitment or use of child soldiers, to designate persons who recruit or use child soldiers as inadmissible aliens, to allow the deportation of persons who recruit or use child soldiers, and for other purposes.

S. 2260. An act to extend the existing provisions regarding the eligibility for essential air service subsidies through fiscal year 2008.

S. 2436. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the term of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue.

The message also announced that the Senate has agreed to concurrent resolutions of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 53. Concurrent resolution condemning the kidnapping and hostage-taking of 3 United States citizens for over 4 years by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and demanding their immediate and unconditional release.

S. Con. Res. 61. Concurrent resolution providing for conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate, and a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

S. Con. Res. 62. Concurrent resolution to correct the enrollment of H.R. 660.

A GREAT YEAR IN CONGRESS

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

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, today, this Congress will adjourn. I want to thank the people of the Ninth District of Tennessee for giving me the honor to represent them in this Congress.

From the first vote that we, as freshmen, took to break the glass ceiling and elect Speaker PELOSI to whatever the last vote is today, during this year we passed historic legislation on energy, on ethics, and the environment. We've done things on children's health care that hasn't come to fruition, but we've tried, and the same thing in ending the war.

This has been a Congress that has tried to accomplish a lot, has accomplished some, brought change for the American people, and will continue to do so next year.

I have had the honor to stand up in my district for The MED, for LeMoyne-Owen College, for the COPS program, for Blue Cross at the University of Memphis, and for our largest employer, Federal Express.

Madam Speaker, it's been a grand year. I am proud to be a Member of this United States Congress and to represent this great country.

God bless the United States of America.

IN RECOGNITION OF GEORGE HARPER

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to wish a fond farewell to a member of the Second District staff, George Harper. George has been a member of our team for almost 2 years, and he has brought a strong level of professionalism and personal integrity to the job. I am happy to report that George will not be traveling far as he joins Congressman JON PORTER's office as a legislative assistant.

A graduate of the University of Nebraska, George first came to Capitol Hill as a summer intern in the office of Senator JIM DEMINT of South Carolina. After serving as a deputy legislative assistant to Senator CHUCK HAGEL of Nebraska, he joined our office, first as a scheduler and then as legislative correspondent.

George's hard work, dedication and pleasant demeanor have made him an invaluable member of our staff as we work hard to address the needs and concerns of the people of the Second Congressional District. Our office will miss George tremendously. And we wish him all the best in all his future endeavors.

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

HONORING THE HEROICS OF HASSAN ASKARI

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to applaud the bravery of a young man, Hassan Askari. On December 9 of this year, Hassan Askari risked his own safety and his life to defend a group of strangers who were attacked on a New York City subway.

What started as an exchange of Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah between two fellow passengers ignited into a violent exchange of anti-Semitic slurs and violence.

A group of men and women attacked the Jewish passengers, and only one passenger came to their defense, Hassan Askari. Hassan, like the men he was trying to help, was beaten and pummeled by the attackers. But as he said with regard to his actions, "I believe we are all members of one family, and my religion teaches me always to come to the aid of my fellow man in distress."

Hassan is a Muslim from Bangladesh. He was taught, as we all should be, that we are humans first, first and foremost. And no matter what our faith or race, we should treat each other with respect.

Hassan's actions on the subway were human nature at its best, and I applaud him for interceding to stop a senseless act of violence and hate. I hope his actions will serve as an example for all of us.

PASS A CLEAN AMT FIX

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

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, how much longer do American taxpayers have to wait for Congress to pass a sensible and fair fix to the alternative minimum tax? This highly punitive tax, originally intended to catch only the worst of tax scofflaws, will hit 23 million middle-class taxpayers next year if Congress doesn't act now. Unfortunately, the majority's delay tactics have already caused a cascade effect that will delay the tax refunds of 50 million Americans. If Congress keeps stalling, things will go from bad to worse.

The Senate already rejected a poorly conceived plan that temporarily patches the AMT, but on the condition of enacting a permanent tax hike. Only in Washington does it make sense to make a temporary 1-year tax patch and counter it with a permanent tax hike.

Let's stop the charade and pass an AMT fix that protects millions of middle-class Americans from a huge tax increase. If Congress delays any longer, those 23 million taxpayers will be saddled with an unexpected and severe \$2,000 tax increase.

The Senate sent us a clean AMT bill nearly 2 weeks ago. Before we go home, we need to do the right thing and pass it. American taxpayers deserve no less.

COACH BROYLES

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

Mr. SNYDER. Penn, my 18-month-old little boy, thanks to his mother's teachings, can now do the official signs for touchdown, illegal procedure, blocking the back, and of course his favorite, Who is number one? The Arkansas Razorbacks.

I say thanks to his mother because, while she is now a full-time Methodist minister, I am convinced for several decades of her life the Holy Trinity was the Father, the Son and the Holy "Coach," with the coach, of course, being Frank Broyles of the Arkansas Razorbacks.

Coach Broyles' career is coming to an end at the end of this month as both a great coach and an outstanding athletic director. He has also been very active and may have visited with Members here in the Congress about his work on behalf of Alzheimer's research and the treatment with respect and dignity of Alzheimer's patients.

We wish Coach Broyles well as his career is ending, although it wouldn't surprise me that another college might try to pick him up.

IN HONOR OF JOHN FRANKLIN "FRANK" BROYLES, UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I proudly rise with my Arkansas colleagues this morning to recognize a man who meant a great deal in my life and a great deal to those who are fans of college football and the University of Arkansas.

I rise to honor the legacy and career of Frank Broyles, the athletic director of the university and former head football coach who will end his 50-year run with the Razorbacks on December 31.

Frank Broyles is an icon in Arkansas and a legend in the world of collegiate athletics. His new mission, among other things, will be to educate Americans on caring for loved ones suffering with Alzheimer's.

The names of those associated with Coach Broyles are impressive: Jerry Jones, Jimmy Johnson, Barry Switzer, Johnny Majors, Joe Gibbs, Raymond Berry, and the list goes on and on, all played or coached for Broyles over his career. He even teamed with the legendary broadcaster Keith Jackson for several years to bring the college games to our homes every weekend.

I will be forever proud to be a Razorback and to have had the opportunity to be one under Coach Broyles. I congratulate him on his career, and sincerely thank him for his service to the great State of Arkansas. And as we say in Arkansas, Wooo, Pig Sooey.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO COACH BROYLES

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

Mr. BERRY. Madam Speaker, first, I would encourage everyone to remember our men and women in uniform and their families and reach out to them.

The Arkansas delegation rises this morning to pay tribute to a man that has made magnificent contributions to the State of Arkansas, to college athletics, to this country. His leadership, working together with the people of Arkansas, has demonstrated the great value of the people working together for the common good.

His contributions are unmatched. He has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt the value of integrity and decency, always take the high road. He has made us all very proud to be Razorbacks, as has just been alluded to from my colleague in northwest Arkansas, but he has also demonstrated to the human race what it means to not only be a Razorback, but to be a man of great class and integrity and always take the high road.

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