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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SOLIS).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Washington, DC, March 9, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HILDA L. SOLIS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

At the beginning of another day, we pray, Lord God, that divine providence guide this Nation and all nations, and every believer, each in his or her own way.

Help each of us, Lord, to accept the path to holiness upon which You draw us by Your word whispered in our hearts.

In Your Spirit, enable us to accomplish Your holy will by the detailed performance of everyday duties and routine tasks. Help us to do excellent work that will give You glory and satisfy our sense of purpose.

Strengthen us when it is difficult to accept what we cannot avoid and endure with love and resignation the things that could cause us to grow weary or become disgusted.

In truth, we do not see the whole picture or how we are already united in Your unconditional plan, so we must trust. We must place all our trust in You, now and forever.

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. Will the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain five 1-minute speeches on each side.

DIFFERENCES IN STRATEGY BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND DEMOCRATS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. There has been a lot of news on Iraq and the differing strategy between Congress and the President. Let's be clear about where the differences lie.

The administration wants more time after 4 long years in Iraq; Democrats say it's time for a conclusion to the open-ended commitment. The administration wants 25,000 more troops for Iraq; Democrats are calling for the troops to be fully trained and equipped. The administration wants more money; Democrats are demanding Iraqis be held accountable for Iraq's future.

The administration policy has us policing a civil war; Democrats want to focus on al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The administration has failed our veterans

on the health care they earned; Democrats are for making sure that the veterans get the health care they deserve.

As Yogi Berra once said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." Madam Speaker, the President wants and is asking for more of the same; Democrats are calling for a new direction.

PRAISING THE SOUTH CAROLINA MILITARY MUSEUM

(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, on February 6, the South Carolina Military Museum officially opened adjacent to the Bluff Road Armory. Five hundred guests gathered at the grand opening, where Adjutant General Stan Spears dedicated the museum in honor of all men and women who have served in the National Guard.

In 1981, the South Carolina National Guard Museum and State Weapons Collection opened in Sumter, South Carolina. Seventeen years later, the museum was renamed and moved to Columbia. Professionally organized by director and curator Ewell G. Buddy Sturgis, the museum seeks to preserve historically significant properties, to provide educational services, and to enhance esprit de corps among men and women serving in the South Carolina military.

Two years ago, Ross E. Beard, Jr., from Camden, South Carolina, loaned the museum a vast weapons collection dating from the 1500s. Mr. Beard has been collecting rare artifacts since he was 10 years old and is revered among

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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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weapons collectors. He is a true inspiration to our troops who serve to protect our freedoms.

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

IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING THE STATE CRIMINAL ALIEN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support for fully funding the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, also known as SCAAP, at its authorized level for fiscal year 2008 at \$950 million.

This program, which reimburses State and local governments for the cost of incarcerating illegal immigrants, is vital to border States such as Arizona, where we disproportionately pay a higher amount than our fair share of incarceration.

Underfunding SCAAP places a significant cost burden on our local law enforcement, stretching their resources and hampering their ability to protect our communities.

All of the counties in my district, Pima, Cochise, Pinal and Santa Cruz, are reimbursed less than 10 percent of the amount of incarcerating illegal immigrants. This places an unfair cost burden on our local communities. Given the importance of homeland security and law enforcement, it is absolutely essential that we receive full funding for SCAAP. I believe that Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle would agree that reimbursement should be a Federal priority.

OPPOSE THE WAR FUNDING PROPOSAL

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do what is right and pass a clean supplemental.

The bill unveiled yesterday would tie our military leaders' hands at the very time they need our support the most. Some want to set a date certain. The reality is the only certain part of this plan is that President Bush has threatened to veto the bill, and critical funding for our troops would be needlessly delayed.

This plan is dangerous, and I would urge all of my colleagues to oppose this war funding proposal. Even Members of the majority party are reacting negatively to the proposal, as well they should.

Everyone agrees that we must make progress in Iraq. We also agree the Iraqi Government must step up and improve the situation. What the Republicans are going to stand against is tying the funds our soldiers need to do

their jobs to benchmarks thought up by special interest groups.

Our men and women in uniform deserve the best, and a haphazard approach is not it. We can do better. We must do better.

BETTER TREATMENT FOR OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, in my district, which stretches along the coast line from West Palm Beach to Fort Lauderdale, we have a number of veterans who have served in wars for this country, ranging from World War II to Iraq and Afghanistan. These veterans have been served well in most cases by clinics in our district, such as the VA Hospital and other outpatient facilities in Fort Lauderdale. But like many places around the country, these facilities have their share of problems as well, largely due to a lack of adequate Federal funding. These facilities are not always able to see and treat the veterans as quickly as they would like to, and of course we all know what is going on at Walter Reed, mold seeping from the walls and ceilings, rats and roaches running freely. These conditions are fit for no one.

This is no way to treat our men and women in uniform who have sacrificed their families, their jobs, their lives, everything to serve our country. We must change the way we are treating our veterans when they return home, and that starts with providing critical funding for health care services and infrastructure needs. To ask them to sacrifice so much for us, only to find when they come home they are treated inadequately on so many fronts is nothing less than immoral.

BORDER PROTECTORS UNDER PHYSICAL ATTACK

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, more news from the second front: the border war with Mexico continues.

According to Reuters and NewsMax, illegals and drug cartels are increasing the tax on U.S. border protectors by the use of rocks, firearms, and even Molotov cocktails. Here is what Webb County, Texas Sheriff Rick Flores in Laredo says: "The attacks against us are becoming more brazen. Drug cartels are telling their people to go down fighting and do whatever is necessary to get those drugs through." He says, "Mexicans fire weapons from across the border at our law enforcement agents." In Arizona, illegals injure border agents by pelting them with large rocks and Molotov cocktails almost on a daily basis, according to one border agent.

And where are the two governments? Well, it seems Mexico could care less

what happens to American border agents since it encourages illegal entry, and our own U.S. Government takes the side of drug smugglers and illegals if border protectors allegedly use force to stop this invasion. Meanwhile, some in Washington fiddle the silly song of tolerance, amnesty and ignorance.

And that's just the way it is.

DEMOCRATS PROVIDING NEEDED OVERSIGHT OF BUSH ADMINISTRATION FAILURES

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, accountability has returned to Washington after a 6-year absence.

This week alone, the new Democratic Congress has provided critical oversight of the administration's unacceptable neglect of our wounded soldiers. At a hearing earlier this week, some of my Republican colleagues said they have known about some of the treatment for several years, but they didn't realize it was this bad. And that is what oversight hearings are for. If you know there is a problem, you haul the Pentagon up to Capitol Hill to get answers.

The old Republican Congress simply ignored these problems. That is not happening in the Democratic Congress. This week, we held four different oversight hearings so that we can find solutions quickly to ensure that what happened at Walter Reed never happens again.

This Democratic House has also held its first hearing this week on the scandal at the U.S. Attorney's Office, where politics once again trumps competence in the Bush administration. Eight U.S. attorneys were fired so the Bush administration could pad the resumes of other attorneys.

The days of incompetence without any accountability are over here in Washington. Real oversight has returned.

SCOOTER LIBBY

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, no town likes a scandal, real or invented, more than Washington, DC, and the latest news involving Scooter Libby has the Beltway crowd abuzz.

Madam Speaker, if Scooter Libby broke the law, he should be held to account. But with all the attention being paid to this scandal, I can't help but think of the double standard that seems to be at play here. Scooter Libby is being prosecuted for the exact same offense that ensnared former President Bill Clinton, lying under oath, perjury and obstruction of justice. But the same people today who are calling for Libby's head were insisting back then