

PRAYER

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

Lord God, You see all things as they truly are. You understand each of us with our human limitations and unique perspectives. In You is reality. For us all is relativity.

Not to be able to sing is one thing; but not to be able to speak or know the common language is something else.

Not to be able to run a marathon is one thing; but not to be able to stand up or walk is something else.

Not to be able to memorize a passage of Scripture or a speech is one thing; but not to be able to remember yesterday is quite another.

Lord God, help each of us accept our limitations and use whatever our capabilities are to do good and bring joy to others. By honestly admitting our own frailties, empower us to accept the differences of others and reach out to them with greater understanding.

Make us a nation who cares for its wounded, who welcomes the immigrant and who looks out for those with disabilities in every possible way both 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 Utah (Mr. BISHOP) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BISHOP 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.

LET'S END THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. KUCINICH. A very simple proposition is facing this House; do we keep the war in Iraq going or do we end it? Do we use the money to bring the troops home or do we use the money to keep them in Iraq?

The lives of our troops are on the line. The war cannot be won militarily. Why do we stay? Why do we tell our troops to keep fighting? Who is going to explain to the families of the troops the consequences of Congress' decision? And why isn't our Democratic Party taking the leadership to immediately end the war? We can do it. We don't have to give the administration another \$120 billion to keep the war going. We don't have to let more troops die and have more civilian casualties.

My bill, H.R. 1234, provides a path to bringing our troops home, ending the occupation, closing our bases and stops the occupation of Iraq. We do not have to keep funding this war. The money is in the pipeline to bring the troops home. Let's end the war, bring the troops home, and bring in international peacekeepers to stabilize Iraq. We can do it once we end the occupation.

CHILD KILLER

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, today is judgment day. A quiet voice is crying from the grave for justice; it is the voice of a 9-year-old girl named Jessica Lunsford.

Jessica was kidnapped in the middle of the night from her home by a professional child molester; his name is John Couey. The criminal abused Jessica for several days and then buried her alive in his backyard. When found, Jessica had poked her tiny fingers through the plastic bag seeking air. Last week, a jury convicted the child killer of capital murder and the punishment hearing begins today in Florida. The State is seeking the death penalty.

Mr. Speaker, evil doesn't get much worse than stealing, abusing and murdering little girls. Society cannot allow this type of conduct to occur. Society can only eliminate it. The punishment assessed on this criminal will set a price for this dastardly act. Hopefully the good people of Florida will, by their verdict, say to all child killers, leave our children alone or face an early meeting with your maker.

And that's just the way it is.

CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT IS BACK IN THE HOUSE

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, it is a fundamental part of human nature that people will do high-quality work when somebody is keeping an eye on their performance. Businesses need accountants, schools need principals and school boards. Appropriate management and a vigilant watchdog can prevent serious problems and keep things running effectively and efficiently.

Well, for 6 years our Federal Government has gone without congressional oversight. This administration has had free rein to do what it pleased, no matter what the consequences. The results simply speak for themselves. Walter Reed, Hurricane Katrina, Iraq.

This is all beginning to change. Under Democratic control, the Congress has finally once again assumed its oversight responsibility. Already, in just 3 months we have had 91 full committee hearings, with 73 more planned. In addition, this week the House will

consider a series of measures to ensure the Federal Government is open and accountable to the people of America.

Mr. Speaker, this congressional oversight is exactly what the people of southern Minnesota asked for, transparent and accountable government for the people. As I campaigned across the First District, I promised to do everything with my colleagues to make this happen, and this week it continues on.

THE PELOSI PLAN FOR IRAQ

(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. Mr. Speaker, the Washington Post has usually been associated with the Democratic Party. Today's lead editorial is especially courageous in criticizing the Democratic plan for Iraq.

I would like to draw to your attention the following: "In short, the Democratic proposal being taken up this week is an attempt to impose detailed management on a war without regard for the war itself. Will Iraq collapse into unrestrained civil conflict with massive civilian casualties, as the U.S. intelligence community predicts, in the event of rapid withdrawal? Will al Qaeda establish a powerful new base for launching attacks on the United States and its allies? Ms. PELOSI's strategy leads not toward a responsible withdrawal from Iraq, but to a constitutional struggle with Mr. Bush, who has already said he will veto the legislation."

Members of both parties should acknowledge the point of this editorial. Al Qaeda spokesman for Osama bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, has clearly identified that Iraq and Afghanistan are the central fronts in the global war on terrorism. To undermine Iraq as clearly part of a global war puts American families at risk.

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

ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT
DEMOCRATS DELIVER WITH LEGISLATION THIS WEEK

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, last year Democrats pledged to make Congress an open and accountable process to the American people. This week the House will consider a series of reform measures that deliver on that promise.

This week we will vote on legislation reforming the Freedom of Information Act, requiring a more timely disclosure of government documents, and another bill that nullifies the 2001 Presidential executive order so that the access to Presidential records is finally restored. Both of these important bills open up government to the American people so that they can hold their government accountable.

Finally, the House will debate a bill providing real oversight of government contracts by limiting how long Federal no-bid contracts can last and requiring agencies to minimize the use of no-bid contracts.

Real oversight will return to Washington, and this week we will pass important legislation that brings real accountability along with it.

NINTH CIRCUIT—JUDICIAL ACTIVISM

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, for years the Federal courts have drifted towards judicial activism, and nowhere is this dangerous trend more fully embraced than the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Based in San Francisco and covering nine western States, the Ninth Circuit has given us some of the more outrageous decisions in recent memory. These are the folks who say the words "under God" are unconstitutional in our pledge. Fortunately for our Nation and our Constitution this mostly Democrat-appointed court isn't the last defense against judicial activism. The U.S. Supreme Court regularly reviews the Ninth Circuit's rulings, and not surprisingly, the high court often overturns them. In fact, in this term the Supreme Court has overturned every Ninth Circuit ruling it has taken up. If you break it out by the votes of the individual Justices, the score is 67 votes to overturn and just five votes to uphold. These are definitely second-string back benchers. It is time they begin interpreting the Constitution, not rewriting it.

IRAQ

(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, I want to express my deepest concern for the situation that is worsening in Iraq.

March 19 of this year will mark the fifth year of war, and still Vice President CHENEY states that the Democratic strategy toward Iraq validates al Qaeda's agenda. This comment really means that anyone that disagrees with him gets accused of this issue.

Terrorists instill fear in their enemies, and it is this fear that generates self-defeating behavior. It is this fear that led the American people to believe that war was a validated solution, and still try to link it to September 11. It is this fear that has cost the United States billions of dollars on Iraq reconstruction plans, while neglecting our own system.

OPPOSING THE DEMOCRATIC SUPPLEMENTAL ACT

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, it is said that politicians live in the past and statesmen vote for the future. Indeed, the options that we have today, both militarily and diplomatic, are based on votes that were taken by Congress 10 or 15 years ago.

The supplemental act recently unveiled by the Democratic majority appears to have been written by politicians, not statesmen. It includes the postponement of the acquisition of two F-35 fighter aircraft, which by itself does not seem too significant, but it bespeaks an attitude to be feared. For when we postpone the acquisition of technologically advanced military equipment, we place the future air superiority, something we have had since the Korean War and take for granted, in jeopardy. When we divert dollars from one branch of the military to support another branch of the military, we place all of the military in jeopardy. All four branches of the military deserve to be fully and adequately funded, and that is something this supplemental does not do.

This supplemental simply starts us down the road to a place where a future Congress will look back and criticize us for our failure to be statesmen.

SUPPORTING THE DEMOCRATIC SUPPLEMENTAL ACT

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, last fall the American people went to the polls and they voted for positive change and new direction, not only in the way we do business here in Washington, but also in Iraq. The 110th Congress is fulfilling the mandate the American people provided by putting forward a supplemental bill that will guarantee three things: First, support for our troops before, during and after being in harm's way; second, accountability and responsibility, not only from our own administration, but from the newly elected Iraqi government as well; and, third, a positive change away from Iraq and back towards al Qaeda by guaranteeing an end to our involvement in the civil war in Iraq.

The American people will no longer write blank checks to this administration, and neither will this Congress; nor will we continue to send our sons and daughters to the sands of Iraq in an open-ended commitment. The time has come for this administration to listen to the will of the people.

The American people demanded new leadership, positive change and a new direction, and that is exactly what this Congress is delivering.

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BALANCE THE BUDGET WITHOUT RAISING TAXES

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, simply chasing higher spending with higher taxes, as the Democrats want, will fail to address the unsustainable growth of government spending. We must balance the budget without tax increases.

Part of the Republican plan is to make permanent the tax relief that continues to support our Nation's economic prosperity. Our pro-growth policies have worked to support our economy's solid sustained growth and have created more than 7.4 million new jobs. This growth has also fueled double-digit growth in Federal revenues and put us on a path to balancing the budget.

The Democrat plan would simply reverse this progress with job-killing automatic tax increases.

The Republican plan also includes reforms to unsustainable entitlement programs so they can meet the mounting challenges and obligations of the future.

Mr. Speaker, the American people elected us to find solutions, not create more problems. I urge my colleagues to work with the Republicans to implement these real and workable solutions for a more fiscally responsible tomorrow.

WALTER REED AND NEED TO TAKE CARE OF OUR WOUNDED SOLDIERS

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

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, since The Washington Post broke the story on Building 18 at Walter Reed, we have heard similar stories of unacceptably bad conditions at other facilities around the country. While The Post should be commended for bringing the information to this Nation, it should never have gotten to this point. Last week, we also learned that some Republican colleagues knew of these conditions and basically did nothing. This response of doing nothing is not acceptable.

Rather than inquiring about such bad conditions and deciding to do something, they choose to brush it off and basically bring it under the table. And rather than finding out who was responsible for the housing of our troops that had mold, that had mice and cockroaches, the administration chose to look the other way.

Doing nothing is not acceptable. Last week, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, which I sit on, held hearings, and will continue to hold hearings, on the treatment of our wounded soldiers throughout this country. We want to see the widespread problems that exist corrected, and we recognize the seriousness. It is time for us to do the right thing for our soldiers.