



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2007

No. 82

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEINER).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 17, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ANTHONY D. WEINER 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: Lord God, who graces the open field with wild flowers and will not allow the sparrow to fall from the sky, You invite us not to worry about needless things.

Certainly there are problems this Congress and every American must face and do their best to solve. It is the unsolvable problem, the indifferent attitude, and the cold heart we must turn over to You.

Because anxiety and anger often enough create heat but no light, we also turn to You in prayer and seek Your wisdom.

With faith in Your faithfulness, Lord, we can reduce fear and hesitancy. By living in Your presence and knowing Your love for us, for others, even our enemies, we can conquer internal conflicts and be better in our self-defense and wiser in our judgments.

So be with us, Lord, and with our military forces now and in the hour of our greatest need. 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 gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PORTER 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 passed without amendment concurrent resolutions of the House of the following titles:

H. Con. Res. 62. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of a National Children and Families Day, in order to encourage adults in the United States to support and listen to children and to help children throughout the Nation achieve their hopes and dreams, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 79. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

H. Con. Res. 121. Concurrent resolution recognizing the benefits and importance of school-based music education, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 123. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the District of Columbia Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 10 one-minute speeches on each side.

FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

(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, yesterday Republicans were forced repeatedly to use procedural maneuvers to protest the unjust proposed change of current House rules denying the minority's right to participate in floor debate.

The political headlines today are correct: "Dems Bend Rules, Break Pledge." If enacted, this would be the first change to such a rule since 1822.

After declaring to run the "most open Congress in history," Democrat leaders have repeatedly broken this promise and sought to stifle the minority's voice, beginning with their first 100 hours and now even through 100 days.

If Democrat leaders are intent on suppressing the representative voice of nearly half of the American population, Republicans are left with no choice but to fight for our right of participation in the legislative process.

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

ETHICS REFORM

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as the ethical cloud of the last dozen years has hovered over Congress, I am proud that the new Democratic Members are aggressively pursuing an agenda of ethics reform. Long overdue.

I have introduced bipartisan legislation with my Oregon colleague, GREG WALDEN, to help establish an independent commission to do the hard work of professionally investigating and evaluating ethics charges. I am hopeful that some provision of that nature will find its way to the floor. The

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5335

Democratic leadership has indicated that they will allow votes on key provisions and allow the votes on such proposals, the chips to fall where they may.

I am confident with a wide range of choices that we will be able to have a longer, stronger prohibition from the congressional lobby revolving door and independent oversight. I hope that Members from both sides of the aisle will seize this opportunity to strengthen our ethics framework.

THE HOUSE BUDGET RAISES TAXES AND SPENDING AT UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, today the Democrat majority is going to bring the House budget resolution to the floor. Last month when they passed the budget resolution, it was the largest tax increase in American history. Today they are bringing a budget resolution to the floor that is slightly an improvement: It is the second largest tax increase in American history. And the only thing that is separating this budget from being the largest tax increase in American history is what they call the "tax trigger," and under their tax trigger, if they actually get to spend all of the money they are hoping to spend, then the surpluses will not materialize and no taxes will be spared and it will yet again become the largest tax increase in American history.

This budget is unprecedented in its scope of its ability to tax and spend. The highest levels of taxes we have ever seen in this country and the highest levels of spending. That is not a way to balance the budget and set our fiscal house in order. We should vote against this budget, which raises taxes and raises spending at unprecedented levels.

ALTMIRE-UDALL AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1585

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, last night the House adopted the Altmire-Udall amendment to provide military families with very simple but much needed support while loved ones are away on combat duty.

Under the amendment that was agreed to, a worker can take family and medical leave to deal with the issues that arise as a result of a spouse, parent, or child's deployment to a combat zone like Iraq or Afghanistan. Under this amendment family members can use the leave to take care of issues like making legal and financial arrangements and making child care arrangements or other family obliga-

tions that arise and double when family members are on active duty deployments.

Supporting the troops is more than a bumper sticker. We must support the troops with all of the support that they need so their families can continue to function during the difficult times of deployment. These deployments and extended tours are not easy on families, and two-parent households can suddenly become a single-parent household and one parent is left alone to deal with paying the bills, going to the bank, picking up the kids from school, watching the kids, providing emotional support to the rest of the family. You have got to deal with these predeployment preparations.

This amendment is a good amendment. I hope that the House will support it with the passage of the legislation. Last year, tragically, it was thrown out in the conference committee and was given no consideration by the majority party of the last Congress.

AMERICANS' LUST FOR NARCOTICS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the border war is increasingly more violent because of the drug cartels seizing control of areas in Mexico to manufacture drugs.

According to the Associated Press, President Calderon has called out the Mexican military to take out the drug smugglers. But some say the drug cartels have more money and outgun even the military. Recently, seven journalists reporting on the "drug war" have been murdered, the second most dangerous place for a reporter in the world next to Iraq. Thousands of Mexican citizens have been killed in the violence.

But the problem is not just in Mexico. As long as the United States does not protect our borders, the drug barons will continue to ship those drugs to America.

Some estimate the cartels make between \$10 and \$30 billion a year shipping that cancer to America.

But the problem has a third ingredient. It is not enough for the military to control the violence in Mexico. It is not enough for us to secure our borders. But the violence will continue until the American consumers curb their lustful appetite for narcotics.

And that's just the way it is.

THE PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE SUPPORT OF THE CONGRESS REGARDING WAR

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, in 2002 this House gave the President a

blank check to go to war. He has gone to war on a very, very shaky basis in Iraq.

Last night, with 10 minutes' debate, we extended the presidential blank check to Iran.

Every morning as I come into my office, I pass the pictures of 75 members of the military from Washington State who have died. How many more are going to die in the war in Iran? We need more than 10 minutes to debate that.

When this country went to war in Vietnam and we extended the war to bombing Cambodia, there was no debate on this floor about that issue. There should be debate, and the President should have a vote of the Congress. They left off the roof with that escalation in Vietnam. They'll do it again if they don't have the support of the Congress.

HOUSE LEADERSHIP BENDING THE RULES TO PASS EGREGIOUS TAX-AND-SPEND POLICIES

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, though I am only in my fifth month of service in this Chamber, I have developed a deep admiration and respect for the men and women in this body. But, frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the new House leadership has been inflicted with a severe case of amnesia.

In March of 2005, the then Democratic minority in the House released a report accusing the then Republican majority leadership of abusing their power through parliamentary tactics designed to suppress dissent. The same leadership that published that report over 2 years ago pledged, at the beginning of this very year, to run the "most honest, most open, and most ethical Congress" in history.

Yesterday these leaders attempted to change a 185-year-old House rule to dramatically increase taxes and government spending against the will of the minority party and the American people. Is this really the way to run the self-proclaimed most honest and most open Congress in America's history?

While House leadership may suffer from amnesia, the American people most certainly do not, and bending the rules to pass egregious tax-and-spend policies will not stand in this people's House.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM: AMERICA'S FRONT DOOR

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, today we are going to debate and vote on the Defense bill. And I stand today to talk about a different issue. About an offense. An offense that celebrates the greatness of America.