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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: "If we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, why should we not accept evil as well?"

Lord, great comfort is provided in this wise question of Job. In times of adversity and anxiety, it is good for us all to recall the gifts You have given us, our Creator, just so that we are able to address what confronts us. Things often taken for granted mean more when inner strength is tested.

So it is, Lord, we approach this day with renewed gratitude for good health and strong relationship in family and in colleagues in Congress. We are also grateful for Your Divine Providence which has brought to us this moment and Your Word and wisdom to guide us that we may accomplish the multiplicity of tasks set before Congress on just an ordinary day.

But since our times are so powerful and threatening, Lord, Job's advice moves us, or should, to deeper gratitude. Only then will we be able to deal with whatever evil we need to face.

The times require us, as never before, to be grateful for our constitutional government, all the natural and human resources of this country, as well as the prayers and encouragement of the American people, for everything, Lord, is Your gift to our Nation. Gratitude will be our strength, now and forever.

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 Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) come for-

ward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COHEN 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

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

CONGRESS DOING THINGS TO MAKE AMERICA BETTER

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, the Congress is at a low point in terms of its ratings with the American public, but I want the American public to know that I am proud to be a Member of this Congress. Congress is part of a system of government that involves the executive and a two-part legislature that includes the Senate and the House. Our system of government is the best ever known to man, and it's working; although slowly, it's working.

The country has told the Congress and the President what the American people want, and that is to bring our troops home from Iraq, or to redeploy them to fight al Qaeda in Afghanistan and other places where there is terrorism.

We have increased the minimum wage. We have put more money into Pell Grants. We have reduced the cost of college loans. We are going to try to pass a bill, which I think we will today, on stem cell research to give people with catastrophic illnesses hope for the future.

This Congress is doing things to make America better. We are doing it in a responsible way with a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a Member of this Congress, and I want this country to know that this Congress is working hard and doing its job to put America on the right course. We are draining the swamp to make this a more ethical place.

TIME TO ACT ON CRISIS IN BURMA

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of freedom-loving people in Burma. This week there is a delegation of leaders from Burma, ethnic minority leaders, visiting Washington. The information they bring is a stark reminder of the brutality to the Burmese people under the military junta.

The terrible offensive of 2006 continues against the ethnic Karen people and others. Over 3,000 villages have been burned. There have been over 25,000 new internally displaced people in that one province.

How can we turn our backs on people who are being ethnically cleansed through genocide, raped, shot, maimed by land mines and who watch their villages and food sources be destroyed daily? The U.S. and the international community must help provide more humanitarian assistance and protection for them.

We need to continue to push for a U.N. Security Council resolution on Burma. The U.S. needs to renew its sanctions against dictators. We need to get direct humanitarian aid to the people.

It is time to act. The people of Burma deserve to live safely and peacefully in their own land.

SUPPORT THE LOAN FORGIVENESS ACT OF 2007

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

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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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Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, our country is facing a severe shortage of registered nurses. The situation is well-documented. The Journal of the American Medical Association has stated that, without changes, the United States will have a shortage of more than 400,000 nurses by the year 2020. To date, there has been limited government action to address this very national need.

Effective health care delivery relies on an adequate supply of well-educated health care professionals, so this week I introduced H.R. 2572, the Nurse Loan Forgiveness Act of 2007, to expand the supply and to help provide for the education of registered nurses, because nurses play a principal role in the health care delivery system in various settings, in hospitals, in home health agencies, in long-term care facilities, managed care centers and community health clinics.

The Nurse Loan Forgiveness Act would forgive up to \$17,000 in Federal loans over a 5-year period for people who have worked in a hospital at least 1 year. If they continue to work, they would be able to, over time, have that entire amount forgiven.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Congress has the ability to take action on this critical issue, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this very important legislation.

RESPECTING ALL LIFE IN AMERICA

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, today Congress is once again poised to pass legislation that authorizes the use of Federal tax dollars to fund the destruction of human embryos for scientific research, and I oppose it.

I believe that life begins at conception. A human embryo is a human life, and therefore I do think it is morally wrong to create human life to destroy it for research.

But while supporters of this bill will argue this debate is a battle between science and ideology, that really misses the point. The debate today is not about whether we should do embryonic stem cell research. It is legal in all 50 States of this country. The debate today is about who pays for it.

It is simply morally wrong to take the taxpayer dollars of millions of pro-life Americans who believe that life is sacred and use it to fund the destruction of human embryos for research.

The debate today is not really about what an embryo is. The debate is about who we are as a Nation and whether we will respect the deeply held moral views of more than half of our citizenry.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill. Having been here before, I expect its passage. On behalf of millions of pro-life Americans, I say, Mr. President, veto this bill again.

ENDING SCANDALS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, at this time last year, the Jack Abramoff scandal was on the front pages of the newspaper. Today, a new guilty plea in the scandal proves it is not over. It is like *deja vu* all over again. The president of a major environmental group with close ties to this administration pleaded guilty to obstructing a congressional investigation and agreed to provide assistance in the ongoing Jack Abramoff scandal investigation.

In little more than 4 months, Democrats and Republicans together in Congress have put an end to “business as usual” on Capitol Hill and passed the most sweeping ethics reform since Watergate. But our work is not done. We must continue to hold those in this institution accountable for their conduct, and reform doesn’t stop at this end of Pennsylvania Avenue. The American people deserve better from their public servants.

This Congress passed legislation to assure that the public trust is not lost at the expense of private interests. We are shining a bright light on the goings on at the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, the Department of the Interior, the Veterans Administration and the Student Loan Administration. With the power to hold hearings and ask questions that demand answers, this Congress is holding the administration and their officials accountable for their conduct and their oversight of the public trust.

America voted for change, and we will hold both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue accountable. We will never accept business as usual in Washington and will not stop until we bring the right reforms to the goings on here in Washington.

A LOVE FOR LIFE

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, sales and marketing is my career field, and I know a little bit about the branding of products and the value that is there, and sometimes the name of the product or the idea can make or break the success of the product. Marketing is not always about the product. Sometimes it is about selling a slogan.

Yesterday we debated the Human Cloning Prohibition Act, which sounds good, right? No one wants human cloning. But what this bill does is just a very clever marketing ploy that sounds good, but leaves open Pandora’s box to a world of dangerous interpretation.

Let’s make it clear: All this ban does is to prohibit a clone from living inside a mother’s womb. It doesn’t ban destroying clones from experimentation, just for human life. So that is good.

But how would this House leadership react when a woman breaks a law and decides to have a cloned embryo inserted into her womb? Would they force her to abort the clone inside of her?

Columnist Charles Krauthammer, a prominent supporter of embryonic stem cell research, says, “This practice sanctions the most ghastly and dangerous enterprise in modern scientific history, the creation of cloned human life for the sole purpose of destroying them in the name of science.”

Mr. Speaker, life is a gift, not a science experiment. Let us have the decency in this Chamber to treat it as such. I strongly opposed the bill and urge all those that believe in the beauty of life to do the same.

Today, we debate embryonic stem cell research. Republicans are often categorized as opposing stem cell research. The truth is that Federal funding for stem cell research has increased by 60 percent since 2004 and was nonexistent before 2001. I support ethical scientific research when it does not depend on the destruction of life and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

SALUTING THE IOWA NATIONAL GUARD’S 1ST BATTALION, 133RD INFANTRY

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the week after Memorial Day to salute the brave men and women of the Iowa National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry. Their devotion to serving their country is worth recognizing, because these men and women put their lives on the line, day in and day out, in Iraq.

On Memorial Day weekend, CBS’s “60 Minutes” devoted an entire hour to telling the story of the 1-133rd, one of the first times since 2004 that they devoted an entire hour to one subject. Many Iowans watched intently that Sunday night as they saw the story of their friends, neighbors and loved ones. We saw a group of Iowans mature over 2 years from their deployment to their pending return back home.

We speak a great deal in this body about our troops and the war in Iraq, and for good reason. But if I have learned anything from my interactions with the 1-133rd over the past several months, it is that the sacrifices we ask our troops to make when they are deployed in a hostile situation thousands of miles from home really are incalculable.

The story of the 1-133rd should be required watching for all the Members of this body, who must weigh the decision to send our troops overseas.

Again, I commend these brave men and women from Iowa.