

WELCOMING REVEREND MICHAEL D. PFINGSTEN

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

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend Michael D. Pfingsten, the U.S. House of Representatives guest chaplain for today.

Mike is a Lutheran pastor of 19 years; and he and his family have joined us from Harvard, Illinois, where Rev. Pfingsten is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

Rev. Pfingsten earned his B.A. in History at Concordia College and Masters of Divinity in History at Concordia Theological Seminary.

On this day in 325 A.D., Christian bishops gathered to discuss the essentials of the Christian faith at the first Council of Nicaea. I am delighted that Rev. Pfingsten, a man who can truly appreciate the significance of this day, was able to lead us in prayer.

DEMOCRATS FUND RIGHT PRIORITIES

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this week the House will consider the 2008 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, which addresses our most pressing security needs in America.

This legislation makes many of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission a reality. It puts new emphasis on protecting our ports and our rail and transit systems. Aviation security is also strengthened with improvements to baggage screenings and a requirement that doubles the amount of cargo screened for explosives on passenger aircraft.

And the bill makes critical investments into border and immigration security as well, by increasing the number of Border Patrol agents to a record 17,800 agents in all.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides for the protection of our Nation while ensuring that taxpayer dollars are well spent by acquiring accountability of our tax dollars.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

(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, this week Democrat leaders will begin pushing their appropriations bills through the House without proper analysis or consideration.

Less than a year ago, the Democrats' top House leader proclaimed that her caucus was committed to restoring integrity to Congress. Specifically, she stated that "Democrats would bring

full accountability and transparency to all earmarks, those in the authorization bills as well as those in appropriations bills." Yet today, even Democrat CNN has editorialized that promised reform is not happening.

Last year, Republicans passed legislation to identify all earmarks by the sponsoring Members' names and Members being allowed to challenge individual earmarks on the House floor.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11. We will always appreciate the courage of Ronald Reagan who declared 20 years today, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall," promoting freedom in Berlin and victory over communism.

NAFTA IS FAILED TRADE MODEL

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, NAFTA held a great promise to provide workers in Mexico and the United States a livable wage. It simply hasn't lived up to that promise. Illegal immigration has increased.

The number of undocumented Mexican workers who live in the United States has skyrocketed in the NAFTA era from an estimated 1 million in the mid-1990s to about 6 million today.

While many people talk about closing down the U.S.-Mexico border, few care to confront the root cause of this issue: the failure of the NAFTA model to provide sustainable livelihoods for workers in Mexico. Over 1 million Mexican farmers lost their livelihoods due to NAFTA-mandated agricultural policy changes. Wages declined for workers.

These are just some of the reasons why one in ten Mexican citizens have made an often dangerous border crossing to the United States.

NAFTA is a failed model. It is time that we change the model. We can't afford to keep approving models based on the same old NAFTA model. And that is what Peru and Panama are, agreements based on the same flawed principles.

IRAQI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY 2-MONTH RECESS

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi National Assembly plans to take its regularly scheduled 2-month summer recess starting in July. Taking such an extended break demonstrates a lack of urgency on their part and political will on the part of the Iraqi parliament.

Defense Secretary Gates told a Senate hearing last month, "I'll be blunt: I told some of the Iraqis with whom I met that we are buying them time for political reconciliation, and that every

day we buy it with American blood. For this group to go out for 2 months, it would, in my opinion, be unacceptable."

Accordingly, I have introduced H. Res. 469, which expresses the sense of the House that the Iraqi National Assembly should cancel or postpone its 2-month recess and work towards meeting political, social and military benchmarks. I urge my colleagues to join with me in sending a message to the Iraqi parliament that they must work to fulfill their obligations.

OPPOSE COLOMBIAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the pending Colombian free trade agreement. Since 1991, over 2,000 labor organizers have been murdered in Colombia. Many of these cases are never investigated, and the perpetrators go unpunished, ready to strike again.

For 13 years I served as the union leader for UNITE HERE Local 617. If I had born in Colombia, there is a strong possibility that I would not be here today fighting for working class people. My effort for higher wages, better working conditions, and a secure pension could have cost me my life.

Many will argue that the labor rights "fixes" in the May 10 agreement between the USTR and congressional leadership will be enough to prevent the deaths of union workers, but no worker protection provision comes close to addressing the brutal violations of workers' rights that we see in Colombia.

Mr. Speaker, in good conscience, I cannot support a free trade agreement that rewards Colombia with prized access to American markets as its workers live in constant fear.

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SECURE THE BORDERS FIRST

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the American people overwhelmingly support border security, but for some reason, some political pandering pundits in Washington, D.C., want to pursue an unwise, open house amnesty policy before dealing with the real first important issue of national security.

It's an issue of trust. I don't think Americans believe our government will really ever secure the border, no matter how many empty promises are made. The reason is too many special interest groups want lax border enforcement for their own political agenda.

Those who want cheap plantation labor and those who want greater political power seem to want the border

laws we have ignored. The motives appear to always be about money or power.

However, our government would do well to assume its constitutional responsibility to protect America. The government has the ability, but not the will, to protect the border.

Congress needs to provide adequate resources for border security. The government has the responsibility then to enforce the law and not give in to special interest groups. Then we can deal with the people that are here illegally after the government proves it has the will to secure our homeland.

And that's just the way it is.

ENDING THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, this Democratic Congress has been successful in raising the minimum wage with help from people on the other side of the aisle, and the President signed that into law.

It has also passed stem cell research with some help from people on the other side of the aisle. The President has threatened to veto that bill and that's unfortunate.

The biggest issue hanging over this Congress is the war in Iraq; and while this Congress has made moves to have timetables and benchmarks, it hasn't achieved a consensus that the President will agree to and effectuate policy that brings our troops home.

It will take colleagues on the other side of the aisle, people who have been wedded to this war, President Bush's war, and have been unable to get themselves derailed from that train that's on a collision course. Until Republicans come forward and heed America's call to bring our troops home, more and more Americans will die in Iraq, more and more American dollars will be spent in Iraq where they shouldn't be.

We need to redeploy our troops to fight terrorists in Afghanistan and other places and keep our country safe. I ask my Republican colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to join us.

SENATE BILL IS NOT THE ANSWER TO IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, today the President of the United States will come to the Capitol Building to revive a deeply flawed immigration bill being considered in the U.S. Senate.

One year ago, the President challenged this Congress to find an answer to the crisis of illegal immigration, and, Mr. President, amnesty is not the answer. The core fallacy of the Senate bill would grant unlimited Z visa amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants

who simply pay a fine and submit to a background check.

While the Senate bill is not the answer, there is a way forward, Mr. Speaker. I truly believe that after the Senate bill goes away, the House of Representatives would do well to come together across party lines and find a way forward that puts border security first, rejects amnesty and creates a new guest worker system that requires illegal immigrants to leave the country to apply and to learn English once they're here.

There is a way forward. We can achieve immigration reform in this Congress, but the Senate bill is not that way.

CROSS-BORDER PILOT PROGRAM BY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today dismayed by the Department of Transportation's decision to rush dangerous Mexican trucks onto American roads.

In the last month, this House voted twice to impose severe restraints on any cross-border trucking program. Three weeks ago, we passed my Safe American Roads Act by an overwhelming, bipartisan 411-3 margin. The supplemental appropriations bill included similar language. It passed both Houses, and it was signed into law by the President of the United States.

But although we have twice loudly and unambiguously rebuked the Department of Transportation, they are simply ignoring the American people. On Friday, they announced plans to launch a cross-border pilot program anyway, in clear violation of both Houses and the will of the American people.

Their actions are deceptive, and they are intolerable. The people's House cannot be sidestepped through bureaucratic trickery. I urge the DOT to put the brakes on this profoundly undemocratic course of action. The safety of our highways is at stake.

HONORING DR. HARLON CRIMM

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Harlon Crimm, who last week announced his retirement as president of Chattahoochee Technical College.

In the past 24 years, Dr. Crimm's contributions to Chattahoochee Tech have been profound. He quadrupled enrollment, making Chattahoochee the largest technical institution in the State of Georgia. He oversaw the college's accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. He instilled a sense of mission and pride in

the institution, helping it gain national prestige.

But Harlon has been molding Georgia's young minds for nearly half a century. He began his career as a high school teacher in Mississippi, later becoming the principal of Lockheed Elementary School in Marietta and director of personnel for Marietta City Schools. My four children attended Marietta, and they benefited greatly from their exposure to Dr. Crimm.

Now in retirement, Dr. Crimm will be able to spend more time with his wife, Jo Ann, a retired Ph.D. educator, and his children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in thanking Dr. Harlon Crimm for his years of service educating Georgia's young minds. In fact, Dr. Crimm eloquently summed up his own work when he referred to his past 44 years in education not as a job or a career, but as a calling.

DEMOCRATS LIVE UP TO THE PROMISES OUR NATION MADE OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, after years of funding cuts by Republican Congresses and the Bush administration to key education, veterans, college aid and transportation programs, this House is now bringing appropriations bills to the floor that invest in the right priorities, while also remaining fiscally responsible.

This week, Democratic leadership will pass the largest increase in veterans health care funding in history, a critical step in fulfilling our Nation's obligation to our service men and women, their families and our veterans.

The Veterans Health Administration estimates that they will treat 54,000 more troops in 2008 than they did over the last year, including more than 263,000 veterans of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. This House is going to provide our veterans the health care services they are entitled to.

We also add 1,000 new claims processors to reduce the backlog of benefit claims so that our veterans will get the services they need in a timely way.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress is dedicated to fulfilling our commitment to our veterans in a fiscally responsible way.

SECRET EARMARKS

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, for months we have heard the Democrats' promises that they would make this the most transparent and ethical Congress that our Nation has ever seen, and of course, we all want to