



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2007

No. 101

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

In the book of Judges, Lord God, the parable of the trees is told to convince Your people they do not want a monarchy. Perhaps the same parable has another meaning for people today living in this constitutional democracy.

In the parable, each tree which wishes to be king over the other trees excuses itself from leadership. The olive tree is reluctant to offer its rich oil; the fig tree, its good fruit; the vine, its intoxicating wine. So all the trees plead with the buckhorn to have authority over all the other trees. But the buckhorn has nothing to offer but its own shadow.

Lord, may each Member of Congress offer his or her very best to the work of governance. This awesome responsibility does cost them dearly. That is why, as Your people, Lord, they need our prayer.

If they do not offer all the gifts of mind and heart they are called to sacrifice for this government by the people, they can only cast a long shadow over a believable democracy.

So speak, Lord, to Your servants and allow Your gifts to flow across this Nation 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 Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PERLMUTTER 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 a bill of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 76. Concurrent Resolution honoring the 50th Anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) and its past contributions to space research, and looking forward to future accomplishments.

The message also announced that pursuant to Executive Order 12131, as amended, the Chair appoints the following Member to the President's Export Council:

The Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN).

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 10 one-minute speeches from each side of the aisle.

PRESIDENT'S VETO OF STEM CELL RESEARCH

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, President Bush has once again used his veto pen to stifle scientific research. Yesterday, the President vetoed bipartisan legislation passed by this Congress that would have expanded potentially lifesaving stem cell research.

The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act would have authorized Federal funds to be used for research on embryonic stem cell lines derived from embryos at in vitro fertilization clinics

that would otherwise have been discarded.

An overwhelming number of Americans, including doctors, scientists, health organizations, and communities of faith have been vocal in their support for this critical research because of cures it might offer to those stricken with diabetes, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, cancer, spinal cord injuries and countless other ailments.

President Bush's decision to once again veto an expansion of this research that could bring hope to millions with life-threatening and debilitating diseases is dangerous to those who are suffering. This Democratic House will continue to push for Federal funding of this ethical and critically necessary research.

LONESTAR VOICE—GEOFFREY BROWN

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the Lonestar Voice this week comes from Geoffrey Brown of Baytown, Texas. Here is what he has to say:

"We need to show more sympathy for these people. They travel miles in the heat, they risk their lives crossing a border. They don't get paid enough wages. They do jobs that others won't do or are afraid to do. They live in crowded conditions among a people who speak a different language. They rarely see their families, and they face adversity all day every day. No, I'm not talking about illegals; I'm talking about our troops. Doesn't it seem strange that the (politicians) are willing to lavish all kinds of social benefits on illegals, but don't support our troops and have threatened to defund them?"

Geoffrey Brown echoes the sentiments of many other Americans who wonder why so many people in Washington show more concern for illegals

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.



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who pledge allegiance to other countries than they do our U.S. troops fighting in the deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan.

Supporting the American military and our veterans is more important than expensive giveaway programs to illegals.

And that's just the way it is.

STEM CELL RESEARCH VETO

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, this House has repeatedly passed the bipartisan Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act to authorize Federal funds to be used for lifesaving research on embryonic stem cell lines that would otherwise be discarded. This type of research, conducted under strict ethical standards, is supported by an overwhelming number of Americans because of the hope it offers for the potential cures of many diseases, such as diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, cancer and MS.

But yesterday, President Bush once again vetoed this important bill. In an attempt to save face, the President instead signed an executive order that will do little to advance essential medical research. The symbolic order is the President's attempt to score political points, but it fails to direct new resources or support for potentially life-saving research.

A majority of this House and a majority of the American people are fed up with the Bush administration's stifling of this important life-affirming science. Democrats will continue to fight to promote important and groundbreaking research so that we can provide real hope to millions of Americans.

IN APPRECIATION OF ROB PORTMAN

(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, I rise today in recognition and appreciation of Rob Portman and his service to our great Nation, first, as a fellow Member of the House; then as United States Trade Representative; and, most recently, as Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Rob has proven to be an outstanding public servant. I know that Jim Nussle will be a competent successor and carry on in Rob's footsteps for the taxpayers. I am grateful my Republican colleagues and I had the opportunity a few minutes ago to thank Rob and wish him well.

Rob was the featured guest for our weekly Theme Team meeting. I appreciate Theme Team chairman JACK KINGSTON and Krista Cole on his staff for bringing a top-notch speaker every week. I wish Rob, his wife, Jane, and

their three children, Jed, Will, and Sally, all the best in the future.

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

TRADE POLICY

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

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, our current trade policies have had devastating consequences for families and communities in northeast Ohio and across this Nation.

The effects of these damaging trade policies are no longer theoretical; they are real. We need a truly new trade model that addresses the concerns raised by the American people in the last election. Congress must reclaim its constitutional authority over trade.

We must have strong and enforceable standards in our trade agreement. We must address the ever-evolving unfair trade practices used by foreign governments to protect their markets, such as currency manipulation, illegal subsidies and product dumping. We must replace policies that reward businesses for outsourcing jobs with incentives and sensible tax policies that will help our businesses and workers.

We need a new trade model now.

ABSTINENCE/FIDELITY FUNDING PROTECTIONS IN PEPFAR

(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, the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief, called PEPFAR, has instituted a carefully crafted comprehensive approach to fighting the spread of AIDS.

This approach is based on the ABC prevention model that has proven highly successful in Uganda. This model was developed there by Africans in Africa. A stands for abstinence until marriage; B for be faithful, or monogamy; and C for condoms.

This approach is working to reduce AIDS prevalence. But the Foreign Ops appropriations bill that we vote on today seeks to gut this comprehensive approach. Specifically, the bill does away with funding protections for the abstinence and fidelity parts of the model. It would remove the mandate for the A and B portions in the model.

These are very important components, and these are the most effective in reducing AIDS occurrence. Just look at this chart illustrating the experience in Kenya, proof that abstinence and fidelity work.

I have an amendment to restore funding for these protections in a results-based comprehensive ABC approach. I urge support.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE, DEMOCRATS PROVIDE LARGEST FUNDING INCREASE EVER

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

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, last week, the new Congress adopted the most significant expansion of veterans health care in the history of the VA.

The real-life story of Lt. Sylvia Blackwood highlights why this is so important. Lt. Blackwood began suffering from PTSD after serving two tours of duty in Iraq. She found the strength to check herself into the VA Medical Center here in Washington. She was suicidal, but instead of receiving immediate treatment, she was directed to a waiting room. When she was finally admitted, she did not receive therapy or relief.

According to an in-depth series published by The Washington Post this week, unfortunately, Lt. Blackwood's story is not uncommon. An estimated one-third of all veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from mental health challenges.

America's servicemen and -women deserve the best care possible when they return from war, both for their physical and mental health. That is why this new Congress last week passed the most significant expansion and improvement in veterans health care in the VA's 77-year history. It's important for all Americans to take pride in that action.

“HOLD ONTO YOUR WALLET” CONGRESS

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, well, here we are again. Another day, another several billion dollars in new spending proposed by this “Hold Onto Your Wallet” Congress. They have already passed the largest tax increase in history, and they spend too much money.

Today's tax du jour comes in the form of the Foreign Ops bill. The bloated 2008 spending bill will fork over \$34 billion of your tax money, an increase of more than \$3 billion. A subtle change means that under the current bill language, the Mexico City policy, which assures that nongovernmental entities that promote abortion would not be provided U.S. funding, could be completely disregarded and these entities would receive U.S. taxpayer funds.

The provision would mandate U.S. subsidies to organizations that actively promote abortion in foreign nations. Abortion has been a tragedy for many women here in the U.S., and it will carry with it the same hurt and trauma when it's used abroad.

If this language stays in the bill, the American taxpayer would be actually paying for an abortion for someone half