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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Wade A. Hyslop, Jr., Trinity Missionary Baptist Church, New London, Connecticut, offered the following prayer:

Our God, the ruler of this Nation, who has given us this good land for our heritage, we humbly beseech You that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Your favor.

We ask that You lead and guide Speaker PELOSI and send down Your spirit of wisdom and justice on these Representatives, that they may serve with a steadfast purpose and devotion to their office to promote the well-being of all people.

We ask You to bless the men and women of our Armed Forces who are defending our country at home and on foreign soil, protecting our liberties.

Unite us in these turbulent times. Give us peace, love and understanding. We place all things in Your hands. 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 Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COURTNEY 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.

WELCOMING REV. WADE A. HYSLOP, JR.

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, it's an honor to welcome today Reverend Wade A. Hyslop, Jr., from New London, Connecticut, to lead the House in prayer this morning.

If he looked comfortable in the podium today, there is a reason for that. For 10 years he served in Connecticut as the deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, someone with whom I served as a colleague on the Human Services Committee and have seen up close the work and impact that he has had in the City of New London and across the State of Connecticut.

He is joined today by his family, who is here, his wife, Jessie; his three children; his son, Bertram, who is a sergeant major in the U.S. Army, serving today in Washington, DC, but also served our country in two deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Again, Wade leads a congregation, the Trinity Missionary Baptist Church in New London, Connecticut, which I have had the opportunity to visit a number of times. It is an energetic, warm congregation, which is clearly being led by a wonderful person whose impact has been felt, not only in that congregation, but the City of New London and the State of Connecticut.

Again, it's a pleasure to welcome him here today and get us off to a good start.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 one-minute requests on each side.

SUPPORT INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL TODAY

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to support the Interior appropriations bill today.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I was able to add \$10 million for the Long Island Sound. That's \$8.6 million more than last year's budget. It's more than \$9.5 million of the administration's request of \$500,000.

This is not a local issue, this is a national imperative. Twenty million Americans live within 50 miles of the shores of the Long Island Sound. The Sound contributes \$5 billion to our regional economy. The Sound is an essential part of our history.

The chairman of the Armed Services Committee is with us this morning. He knows that Nathan Hale crossed the Long Island Sound to infiltrate the British. Generations of commercial fishing families have plied its waters.

Sadly, the Long Island Sound has fallen on hard times as a result of development pressures, nitrogen loading and run-off. This \$10 million literally helps turn the tides of the Long Island Sound.

I urge my colleagues to support it, and I urge the other body to match that \$10 million figure.

THE CASE OF THE MISSING PANTS

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, a new inductee in the Judges Hall of Shame is Judge Roy Pearson of Washington, DC.

It seems that Judge Pearson suffers from the arrogant ailment known as "black robe disease." But instead of issuing a bad ruling, Pearson filed an absurd lawsuit.

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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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Claiming his dry cleaners did not live up to their claim of “satisfaction guaranteed” when a pair of his pants were lost, Pearson decided to sue them for \$54 million. The part of the story that makes Pearson even more despicable is that the dry cleaners did find his pants two days later and gave him \$150 for his trouble. Pearson took the money all right, but he didn’t want his pants back.

At the trial, the judge admonished Pearson, who represented himself, for being completely unprepared in his own case. On Monday, Judge Pearson got a taste of his own medicine when the trial judge not only dismissed the case against the cleaners, but is also making Pearson pay the court costs and \$100,000 attorney fees to the immigrant owners.

The cleaners lost his pants, but now he is losing his shirt, as it ought to be. Shame on Judge Roy Pearson for his abuse of our legal system. Courts work to right actual wrongs, not award money to people who are just too big for their britches.

And that’s just the way it is.

NEW DIRECTION IN CONGRESS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, for years the Republican Congress sat idly by while we spent billions of dollars in Iraq and lost thousands of lives, no questions asked.

Now Republicans are starting to get nervous with the lack of results. On Monday, Senator LUGAR said President Bush’s plan to escalate the war in Iraq has very limited prospects for success and called on President Bush to begin to reduce U.S. forces. It’s exactly what Democrats have been saying all along.

From day one, the new Democratic Congress said that once we have accountability, benchmarks and reporting requirements, we begin to see the beginning of the end. I can now say that the end is in sight. Instead of rubber stamping a failed Iraq policy, Democrats demanded that Republicans and the country measure the progress or the lack thereof of the President’s plan for more troops, more money, more time and more of the same.

Starting in July, we will put the administration of the Republicans to the test, a new direction in Iraq, or more of the same of the present course, vote after vote.

We said last May that we would begin to see the beginning of the end. Just this week, we begin to see that light at the end of the tunnel on this failed policy.

DEMOCRAT BROKEN PROMISES

(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, some on the other side of the aisle made it a habit

to refer to the last session of Congress as a do-nothing Congress. But it seems our friends on the other side are trying to outdo the do-nothingness they complained about all last year.

First they clamped down on the House rules to expedite their so-called 6 for ’06 agenda. Almost none of that became law. Then they delayed an emergency troop funding bill for more than 100 days while our troops in harm’s way waited for the resources they needed to do their job. Now they seem intent on playing another round of chicken with the President over this year’s appropriations bills.

When you throw in hidden earmarks, slush funds, budget gimmicks and the largest tax increase in American history, it’s no wonder the Democrat Congress is currently enjoying its lowest approval ratings ever. Do-nothing Congress? Perhaps now we should say do-less-than-nothing Congress.

LARGEST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN THE WORLD

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the largest refugee crisis in the world, other than the Darfur, is unfolding in Iraq. Four million Iraqis have fled their homes. Two million have fled the country, and an estimated 20- to 50,000 a month or more are added to that toll.

Yet the United States has been able, with all our resources, to only allow 70 Iraqis refugee status in the United States since October, only one in April, only one in May.

It’s time for us to accept responsibility to aid the people in this desperate plight. If there are any, any of my colleagues who have any doubt that we need to change the policy and reach out to them, I would urge that they seek out the soldiers who have returned home, who are fighting to try to save their interpreters and their guides.

The heart-wrenching stories of people via cell phone trying to guide them to safety will, I hope, inspire you to action and encourage you to support bipartisan legislation, H.R. 2265, for Congress to do its job for these refugees.

NOTHING FAIR ABOUT THE FAIRNESS DOCTRINE

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

Mr. PENCE. Beginning in 1949, the Federal Communications Commission enforced the so-called fairness doctrine that required broadcasters to present controversial issues in a fair and balanced manner.

It sounds reasonable enough, but there is nothing fair about the fairness doctrine. Thankfully, the FCC overturned its own ruling in 1985. Since the demise of the fairness doctrine, talk

radio has emerged as a dynamic forum for public debate and an asset to the Nation.

Unfortunately, in the name of fairness, there has been much talk recent days about bringing back the fairness doctrine. Liberal think tanks and elected officials in both political parties in Congress are contemplating it. Bringing back the fairness doctrine would amount to nothing more than government control over political views expressed on public airwaves, and it must not be allowed to occur.

This week I will be introducing the Broadcaster Freedom Act that will prevent the FCC or any future president from reinstating the fairness doctrine. President Kennedy said, “A nation judge that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a Nation that’s afraid of its people.”

I urge my colleagues to join me as original cosponsors of the Broadcaster Freedom Act and support every effort on the floor this week to leave this unfair fairness doctrine on the ash heap of broadcast history.

LUGAR AND VOINOVICH COMMENTS ON IRAQ ARE THE LATEST EXAMPLE THAT WE ARE OVERDUE FOR A NEW DIRECTION

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, every day now, it’s becoming more and more apparent that the President’s troop escalation plan is not stemming the civil war in Iraq.

In fact, since the plan took effect earlier this year, violence in Iraq is up, and our soldiers are paying a heavy price on the battlefield. For months now, Democrats have stood united in our commitment to forge a new direction in Iraq, but our efforts have received very little support from congressional Republicans.

It appears that is beginning to change. Earlier this week, one of the most respected Members of the Republican party on international affairs, Senator RICHARD LUGAR, said that we must recalibrate our strategy in Iraq to fit our domestic political conditions and broader needs of national security. Then yesterday, Senator VOINOVICH said that he doesn’t believe the Iraqis are going to get it until they know we are leaving.

Both Senator LUGAR and Senator VOINOVICH’s comments are a blow to the White House and serve as yet another example of long-time supporters of the President’s Iraq policy believing we are long overdue for a new direction. It’s time for the congressional Republicans to face the reality and join us in dramatically changing course in Iraq.