

Now, we as Republicans believe in the constitutional principle of one person, one vote. We think that that is important. It is important to adhere to that, that everyone is equal under the law. Everyone is entitled to their vote, everyone is entitled to that representation of one person, one vote. And to change that principle and allow delegate voting would require an amendment of the Constitution. That is not a statement that comes only from me but the Democrats can look at their former Speaker of the House, Tom Foley, who is on record in 1970 when this old issue came up at that point. In 1970, former Speaker of the House Tom Foley, a Democrat from Washington State said, and I am quoting, it is very clear that a constitutional amendment would be required to give delegates a vote in the Committee of the Whole, which is the full House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this act by the Democrats is nothing more than an unconstitutional power grab that they want in order to be able to further their agenda. So we feel that it is important to stand against this. We feel that it is also important that we look at the Constitution, when it says that the House shall be composed of Members chosen by the people of the several States, not delegates representing the non-State territories. There is a distinction here. There is a bright line here.

We also feel like that it is important to note that this plan would run over that tenderly held principle of one person, one vote. The average congressional district has approximately 650,000 people. Mine in Tennessee has a little bit more than that. We know that Speaker PELOSI's has 640,000 people. But we also know that American Samoa has 57,000 people, the Virgin Islands 108,000, and Guam 155,000. So the Delegates that represent those numbers of individuals could vote to raise your taxes, but—and this is another point that concerned my constituents—they would not have to pay them. So their Delegates can vote to raise the taxes of my constituents in Tennessee but those Delegates' constituents wouldn't have to be paying the taxes. They get benefits, they want a vote, they want to use that money. They are just not having to pay the taxes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that this is something that many people would say, well, if we're going to have equity under the law, if they're not going to have to pay though those taxes, if they're going to have a Congressman for 57,000 people and they have their vote for 57,000 or 108,000 or 155,000, then why don't we just change the rules for everybody? The answer to that, Mr. Speaker, we know is because this Constitution means something. This is a Nation of laws. It is a Nation that is built on the rule of law. And to give Delegates the right to vote is inappropriate. It is a circumvention of our law. It is a violation of our Constitution.

Now, we know that the Democrat leadership is trying to ram this through the House and there are some reasons for doing this. They feel like they can literally do it on the sly this week. Tonight is the State of the Union. They feel like they can do this in the shadow of the State of the Union without going through the process of the committees, without going through the process of amending the Constitution. We also know that they would choose to do it before they establish regular order.

Mr. Speaker, you know, we have not been in the committee process. The committees have not been functioning. We have been having bills come straight to the floor without the due diligence and the oversight that is done by the committees. We know the Democrats would choose to circumvent that process and pass this before regular order is established. It is an issue of great concern. I appreciate very much that my constituents have been involved in the issue.

HOPING FOR LESS TALK AND MORE ACTION FROM WHITE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from New York (Mr. McNULTY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, the President is going to come here tonight and by all indications he is going to call for a new era of cooperation. I hope that comes to pass. But that is not his record. On Iraq, he continues to ignore the American people, both parties in this Congress, and even his own generals. And our troops continue to suffer the consequences.

On energy policy, I have been in this chamber for the last several years when the President has spoken, I believe eloquently, about the need to develop alternative sources of energy. Then he gave huge multibillion-dollar tax cuts to the oil companies.

Health insurance is also a subject he is going to address tonight. In the words of former Governor Al Smith of New York, "Let's look at the record." When this President took office, there were 39 million people uninsured in this country. Today that number is 47 million, up by 8 million people. We're going in the wrong direction.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that in the year 2007, from the White House and from this administration, we get less talk and more action.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 18 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at noon.

PRAYER

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

Lord God, King of the universe, Creator of all, tonight television cameras and media from around the world will be focused on this Chamber, where President George W. Bush, 43rd President of the United States of America, will address a joint session of the 110th Congress in his State of the Union.

Holding the office of the highest authority in the land and elected by the people of this Nation, he has become a world figure whose words and actions draw the attention of peoples worldwide and will shape the human events of our time. Thereby, he is so deserving of our prayer today and every day. We owe him our prayerful support as free citizens who pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Lord God, bless, protect and guide our President, for Divine Providence has called him at this moment to be a living symbol of free democracy and a blessing for this Nation and for the world. Grant him health, wisdom and strength.

For You, O Lord God, give strength and power to Your people, both 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 Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon 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 with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 38. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 8002 of title 26,

United States Code, the Chair, on behalf of the Committee on Finance, announces the designation of the following Senators as members of the Joint Committee on Taxation:

The Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS).

The Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER).

The Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD).

The Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH).

PRESIDENT NEEDS TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT ADDRESSING NATION'S HEALTH CARE NEEDS

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, the skyrocketing price of health care continues to be a major concern for millions of Americans. Skyrocketing costs are causing the number of uninsured Americans to increase by 1 million people every year since the President took office.

Last year, during his State of the Union Address, the President promised his administration would "confront the rising cost of health care, strengthen the doctor-patient relationship, and help people afford the insurance coverage they need." The President did not live up to his promise.

Madam Speaker, the President can no longer afford to provide lip service on health care. The proposal that the President will unveil tonight will do nothing to lower health care costs, nor will it provide health insurance to more Americans. He should reject this proposal and instead work with this Democratic Congress to help come up with real health care solutions.

CONDEMNING THE BRUTAL MURDER OF HRANT DINK

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

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I rise to condemn the brutal murder of newspaper editor and leading figure in the Armenian genocide debate in Turkey, Hrant Dink.

Last Friday freedom of speech suffered a setback as Dink was shot three times in the head in broad daylight outside of his office. As a Turkish citizen of Armenian descent, he had gained notoriety in Turkish society for the court cases brought against him, in which he faced jail time for simply talking of that genocide. Nationalists see such statements, they say, as insults to the honor of Turks.

Well, Dink was mourned worldwide, and journalists like him and Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk continue to be persecuted by suppressive laws that seek to stifle discussion on matters that are claimed to be insulting to Turkish identity.

It is my sincere hope that the Turkish Government uses this tragedy to revisit its laws and open up to free speech. The laws themselves are a catalyst for this type of intolerance.

STATE OF UNION ADDRESS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN WORKING IN BIPARTISAN FASHION

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

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, last November the American people demanded real results to improve their everyday lives and strengthen middle-class families. Tonight President Bush has the opportunity to change course and work in a bipartisan way to deliver results for America's families.

The new Democratic Congress has not waited for the President to ask. In our first 100 hours, this House has already succeeded in passing legislation to raise the minimum wage, expand Federal funding for stem cell research, implement the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, require negotiation for lower prescription drug costs, make college more affordable and end subsidies for Big Oil to invest in clean, renewable energy.

Tonight I would hope that the President would voice support for these popular bills. After all, they received strong bipartisan support here in the House. On average, 67 Republicans supported each of these bills.

The Democratic Congress looks forward to working with the President to take America in a new direction, but in order to do that, the President needs to realize that he cannot continue down the same road he has traveled for the last 6 years. We will see tonight if he has learned that lesson.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO PASS THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT

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

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, the failure of Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act amounts to breach of faith to the more than 600 forested counties across America.

For Grant County, Oregon, where 61 percent of the land in the county is Federal, this means the school district will now be forced to eliminate essential school programs and nearly double class sizes, delay school repairs and begin telling teachers, administrators and staff who gets to stay and who has to go.

School Superintendent Newell Cleaver puts it this way: "We are watching our infrastructure being destroyed as this issue is debated in Congress. This program is the difference between rural

schools remaining competitive with urban schools or not."

Grant County Commissioner Boyd Britton says, "If the Federal Government would simply allow us to manage these natural resources, we would not need these funds. However, losing these funds will be felt by every man, woman and child in the county, especially the school children."

My colleagues, Congress needs to pass H.R. 17 and keep the Federal Government's word to timbered communities and the citizens who live there. Time is running out for them.

TIME TO GET TO THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, President Bush will deliver his State of the Union Address tonight. The American people have been very clear in what they want. They want a change in the tone, they want a change in direction in Iraq, and they want our national priorities to focus on helping families.

The President should use this opportunity to answer some questions. I know my constituents would like to hear three things from the State of the Union: One, how is the President going to work with Congress to really fix this country's broken health care system; two, how is the President going to bring our troops home swiftly and safely; and, three, when is the President really going to return to the domestic priorities.

The Democratically controlled House and Senate are ready for him to change his agenda, change his tone and get to the people's agenda. So tonight we hear from our President.

CONGRESS AND AMERICA MUST BACK AMERICAN TROOPS

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I filed a bill to support our troops in harm's way, and I rise in support of them, and in support of this country and this Congress backing our brave men and women in uniform 100 percent.

I fear what all the talk of Washington about pulling funding for our troops is going to do to the privates and sergeants stationed in Camp Blue Diamond, think about it, for the next 11 months.

We are elected to protect our men and women in uniform, just as they protect our freedoms every day. Our guys are fighting for America. They are fighting for you and me.

All this talk of doom and gloom hurts mission success and stifles troop morale. It is imperative our Nation backs our troops to the hilt. As long as we deploy men and women across the