



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2007

No. 73

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, May 7, 2007, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2007

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SHERROD BROWN, a Senator from the State of Ohio.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, bless the United States Senate. If anything is dark in it, illumine; if anything is low, raise; if anything is wanting, supply; if anything is in error, correct. Create in this legislative body a unified force for good in which its Members strive to find common ground. May the leaders who debate in this Chamber be led by their conscience and speak to You before they speak to each other. Make Your way clear to them, and may Your glory be their greatest desire.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SHERROD BROWN 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 4, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable SHERROD BROWN, a Senator from the State of Ohio, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BROWN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will be in a period of morning business today. There are no rollcall votes. Yesterday, cloture was filed on the substitute amendment to S. 1082, the FDA bill, and cloture was filed on the bill. In addition, cloture was filed on the motion to proceed to H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act. Votes will begin Monday at about 4 p.m., and there will be several votes at that time. We are disappointed we were not able to finish FDA yesterday, as anticipated. I am confident we can finish it Monday night or Tuesday.

We have a lot to do next week. As I have indicated, I am going to move to the immigration bill on Wednesday so debate on that can start on the following Monday. We also have the op-

portunity to complete our budget for the year. I have spoken to Senator CONRAD on a number of occasions. I have spoken to the Speaker on this issue. It is very close to being in a position that we can bring it to the floor. It is my understanding the House will appoint conferees on Monday, and we will do that on the next day. It is a privileged motion. There is 10 hours of debate, and there are some procedural issues dealing with motions to instruct. We will find out how many there will be on either side. That will take up a lot of time.

The WRDA bill is extremely important. It passed overwhelmingly in the House. I hope we can do the same here.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1301 AND S. 1305

Mr. REID. It is my understanding there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1301) to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

A bill (S. 1305) making emergency appropriations for American troops overseas, without unnecessary pork barrel spending and without mandating surrender or retreat in Iraq, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings with respect to these bills en bloc.

- This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

IRAQ

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this week a historic discussion began between Congress and the White House about the way forward in Iraq. On Wednesday, a meeting occurred between the President and congressional leadership following the President's veto of a spending bill that would have made America more secure, fully funded the troops, and changed the course in Iraq. It has taken almost 4½ years, but it appears the President finally is willing to consider what most Americans and Members of Congress have long known, that we must change course in Iraq and move toward a strategy that will make our country more secure.

It took 6 years and 3 months for the President to accept Congress as a co-equal branch of Government. Prior to last Wednesday, the President basically had ignored the constitutionally framed equal branch of Government, the legislative branch. From that perspective, it was a positive step forward.

During the first 6 years of this congressional term, the President basically ignored us. There was a big rubber stamp. Anything the Republican Congress thought the President wanted, they gave him. But yesterday, the minority leader and I met with the President's Chief of Staff Josh Bolton to further that discussion that started Wednesday in the White House. I thought the meeting was constructive, comfortable. It is clear, at this early point in the negotiations, that nothing is off the table. We agreed to meet again early next week. Meanwhile, I will be talking with members of my caucus, Senator MCCONNELL, and with our experts, and we will continue to work on ideas for a way forward in the quagmire in Iraq.

I know many of my Republican friends in the Senate believe strongly that a change of course in Iraq strategy is needed, one that holds the administration and the Iraqis accountable for real results. I know many of my Republican friends intend to be part of that solution on the way forward. I look forward to working with them, as I have the last few weeks. Work is now in progress, and we will work to reach agreement on a bill that fully funds the troops while providing a responsible new course that makes America more secure and leads to an early end to America's involvement in the Iraq civil war.

Events on the ground give this challenge great urgency. The month of April saw an American death toll of more than 100, making it the deadliest month of the year for our troops in Iraq and one of the deadliest in the 5½ months of this war.

The President's own Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction released his quarterly report last week-

end which painted a dispiriting picture of waste, ineffectiveness, and failure to achieve even minimally satisfactory results. Despite burning through most of the 20 billion American dollars planned for reconstruction, most Iraqis are without basic necessities such as electricity and clean drinking water. Only a third of Iraq's children are regularly attending school, and 70 percent are suffering from symptoms of trauma that will likely paralyze an entire generation on which we are counting to harvest the seeds of democracy.

Iraqi Prime Minister al-Malaki, a Shia, is accused of sabotaging efforts for peace and stability by firing some of the country's top law enforcement officials for doing too good a job of combating violent Shia militias. President Bush speaks of pressuring the Iraqi people to take responsibility for their own future. Yet while American troops are fighting and dying to secure the country, the Iraqi Government is planning a 2-month summer vacation.

We throw around a lot of numbers and statistics to highlight the failures and high stakes of the war. We must also remember that behind each of these numbers—104 deaths during the month of April—is a personal story.

Yesterday, a Las Vegas newspaper published an article about a 26-year-old Nevadan named John Shoup. After surviving 7 months in Iraq, John returned home to Nevada without apparent physical injury. Many of his friends were not so fortunate, he said. At home, though, almost immediately, John's wife Lori knew he was not well. She said:

I noticed in the first week he wasn't sleeping . . . he started to get a little snappy . . . he started crying and started throwing things.

John told his wife about the four roadside bomb attacks he survived.

The article goes on to say, among other things:

But the worst, [his wife] said, were the times he was called to bag up body parts of dead soldiers who had been blown up by improvised explosive devices on patrols ahead of his platoon . . .

With her husband displaying the same classic symptoms of PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder, she checked him into a privately owned psychiatric hospital where he was treated for major depression related to [post-traumatic stress disorder].

He was given anti-depressants and while he was there, she said, his first sergeant called to inform him he would be listed as absent without leave and his paycheck for May would be canceled if he didn't report back to his squadron in Iraq, one of the many regular Army units whose tours had been extended.

Lori Shoup said her husband told the first sergeant about his battle with PTSD. The sergeant's response to him, she said, was: "How's that different from the way you normally act?" [She said] that really upset him. It was if they didn't care.

With his mental problems persisting, John Shoup met with doctors at O'Callaghan Federal Hospital at Nellis Air Force Base. Doctors there tried to help him, but on April 16, the day before he was supposed to report to Fort Drum, his condition took a turn for the worse. While at home, he took too many

drugs, described as a suicide attempt, and Lori had to rush him back to Nellis hospital. His stomach was pumped and he was put in supervised care.

He continues to struggle with his illness and now awaits another transfer from the hospital at Nellis Air Force Base near his home in Nevada to Walter Reed here in Washington.

We all know that war comes with casualties. I have talked about John Shoup. I have read quotes from Lori Shoup, his wife. She is also a casualty. She had to be hospitalized. She had a nervous breakdown.

Our soldiers have always shouldered the burden when the mission is to protect America's security. John Shoup did that.

What is our mission today? When he was asked that question, he replied:

All we do is drive around and wait to get blown up.

Our troops are interjected between warring factions, kicking down doors, trying to sort Shia from Sunni or friend from foe. Meanwhile, Afghanistan is deteriorating. Osama bin Laden remains at large, and al-Qaeda is rebuilding its strength. Our current strategy is not a strategy for success. It is a recipe for more death and destruction, overburdening our military and leaving America less secure.

Today's USA Today newspaper talked about a lot of John Shoups. In fact, they said there are 150,000 brain injuries caused by what has happened in Iraq to our troops; 15,000 is what USA Today reports.

We approach these discussions with the White House with an open mind and sincere desire to move forward. But John and Lori Shoup and all Americans deserve to know what our resolve to change course in Iraq will be. Our course cannot be one to waiver from doing everything we can to get the President to change the mission, to transition the mission in Iraq. Fifty-one months of what has happened in Iraq has not been good for the country, certainly not good for the world.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the article from the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From reviewjournal.com, May 2, 2007]
IRAQ DEPLOYMENT CHANGED SOLDIER: POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER DELAYS RETURN

(By Keith Rogers)

When Army Spc. John Shoup came home on leave two months ago after serving seven months in Iraq, he wasn't the same man his wife, Lori, had known since they married four years ago. "We noticed he was very different," Lori Shoup said Monday, sitting on the porch of their Las Vegas condominium not far from where fighter jets take off from Nellis Air Force Base. I noticed in the first week he wasn't sleeping," she said. "He started to get a little snappy and stuff. . . . He told me he didn't want to talk about it."

Before his two-week leave was over, the nightmares and the horrifying memories of the so-called Triangle of Death in south