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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

Rev. Fred Lucci, Director, All Saints Catholic Newman Center, Arizona State University, offered the following prayer:

Gracious and loving God, creator and source of everything that is good, You have blessed us in ways beyond anything we could have imagined for ourselves. Please always keep us mindful that every good thing we have, every possession, every talent, every relationship, our health and very life itself is a gift from You. Mindful of these blessings, make us always-generous people in Your own image.

Look now upon this assembly and fill them with the spirit of Your wisdom. May every decision they make reflect Your goodness, promote and protect the dignity of every member of our society, especially the weakest and most vulnerable among us, and be for the peace and well-being of all.

Finally, loving God, we place into Your healing hands our brother, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY. Please give him strength and comfort him, his family, and all who love him.

We ask You this in hope, 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 Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota 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 and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 2517. An act to amend the Missing Children's Assistance Act to authorize appropriations; and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 354. Concurrent resolution recognizing the 100th birthday of Lyndon Baines Johnson, 36th President, designer of the Great Society, politician, educator, and civil rights enforcer.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 431. An act to require convicted sex offenders to register online identifiers, and for other purposes.

S. Con Res. 79. Concurrent resolution congratulating and saluting Focus: HOPE on its 40th anniversary and for its remarkable commitment and contributions to Detroit, the State of Michigan, and the United States.

WELCOMING FATHER FRED LUCCI

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, my guest today, Father Fred Lucci, is the Director of the All Saints Catholic Newman Center in Tempe, which I have attended for more than 40 years.

I am proud Father Fred, as those of us in Tempe call him, could join us today because he is my pastor and my friend. In fact, he is a friend and mentor to the thousands of parishioners at the Newman Center.

Father Fred has a good heart and a special gift. While it may be easy to provide guidance to long-time parishioners like myself, Father Fred continues to have a positive influence on the lives of thousands of students at Arizona State.

In the 1980s, freshman Fred Lucci arrived at Arizona State University's campus with a music scholarship and his clarinet. His ability to connect with students has endured today. Today, Father Fred is a fixture on campus, easily recognized, eager to listen, and always faithful and helpful in guiding students to strengthen their own spiritual relationships. He has led humanitarian missions and pilgrimages that have lifted the souls of all who participate.

Throughout his years in the priesthood, Father Fred has helped students who need it most find their strength within. In the process, he has made Arizona State a more compassionate campus one student at a time. And he has built a parish that has helped shape Tempe into a more decent and caring community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

POLITICALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY CORRECT SPEECH—IN EUROPE

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, freedom of speech is one of the most basic of all human rights. However, more and more European countries are arresting individuals for insult speech. Speech to be free must allow individuals to criticize religion and government.

The first amendment protecting speech and press is first because it's the most important. But in Europe, speech must be politically and religiously correct. Criticize or insult another person's religion and you're likely to be hauled off to prison thanks to

□ 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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the speech police. After all, heaven forbid, offensive or insult speech may hurt somebody's feelings.

In Germany, an insult to a religion can be a crime worthy of imprisonment. Recently, a 61-year-old German businessman was convicted and sent to jail for offending Islam. The same thing happened in Britain where Nick Griffin was prosecuted for describing Islam as a "vicious and wicked faith."

Free speech must be universal. If controversial issues like religion and politics cannot be debated in countries, the people are not free, even in Europe.

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Free speech, exercised both individually and through a free press, is a necessity in any country where people are themselves free."

And that's just the way it is.

THE DOLLAR IS WEAKENING

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

Mr. KUCINICH. The great amount of borrowing this country is doing from nations like China, Japan and Korea is weakening our dollar. Many of us know that we're borrowing money from China to prosecute a war in Iraq.

So with a weakened dollar, we're seeing a contribution here to the increased cost of crude oil. The weaker the dollar, the higher the price of crude oil. Today, the price of crude oil is about \$130 a barrel. We're looking at gasoline this summer perhaps as much as \$5 a gallon.

We need to change our economic direction. We need to strengthen our dollar. We need to change our monetary policy and stop borrowing. We need to go after these oil companies, not only in international courts with antitrust action, but we need a windfall profits tax. And if that fails, we need to have an honest discussion in this country about why we let the oil companies control the economy anyway.

Why don't we start looking at ways to take back the power of the people so that we can have control of our own destiny?

COUNTY PAYMENTS: HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OREGON

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

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, by refusing to renew the county payments program, Congress has broken its promise to rural, timbered America.

I've told you in the past about Harney County, a county that has 78 percent of its land mass, the size of New Jersey, all Federally controlled, 70 percent of its road budget affected by this law that has not been reauthorized.

Let me tell you today about Hood River County, where Congress' failure

to act to renew the county timber payments program has forced this county to develop multiple county budgets because we don't know what's going to happen in my home county. One thing is for sure, though, the county annually uses up to \$130,000 of Federal forest payments to fund search and rescue operations in the Mount Hood National Forest and Mount Hood itself. You see, Hood River County is responsible for most of the search and rescue operations on that great mountain, and now those costs will be borne by the county because the Federal Government is shirking its responsibility.

That could change. We could pass H.R. 3058, a bill to reauthorize county timber payments. It has been on the Union Calendar for 127 days, held hostage by this leadership. The Democratic leadership refuses to bring it up for a vote.

Make good on the Federal promise. Let us vote on H.R. 3058.

THE HOUSING CRISIS

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

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, with nearly 8,000 foreclosures being filed daily, there is no question that Americans continue to fear losing their homes. In my home State of New Hampshire, it is predicted that nearly 4,300 families will lose their home by 2009.

This month, the House passed landmark housing legislation that will address the housing crisis directly, stabilize the housing market, and make a real difference for families at risk of losing their home. The bill will also help revitalize communities that have become vacant because of high housing foreclosure rates.

We are also working to provide relief to families struggling under the burden of higher gas prices and soaring costs for food and health care.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot fix our struggling economy until we address the housing crisis, but the Bush administration has ignored this growing problem for far too long.

I hope that President Bush and his allies will reconsider their opposition to our commonsense housing package so we can provide hope to the millions of Americans struggling in President Bush's recession.

□ 1015

IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT FIRST CLASS GEORGE KOON

(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, last Saturday I had the honor of attending a memorial service celebrating the life of Sergeant First Class George Walter Koon. Sergeant Koon

was a soldier of the United States Army Infantry during the Korean War. He was a POW murdered while in captivity in 1951, but his body remained unrecovered for over half a century. It was not until recently that the hard work of his family and the Department of Defense helped positively identify Sergeant Koon and return him from North Korea to his family in Leesville, South Carolina.

The life and story of Sergeant Koon is an example of tremendous courage and commitment. His brother Reverend Carl Koon correctly stated that "freedom isn't cheap and it isn't free." His sacrifice and that of his fellow American soldiers will never be forgotten to liberate dozens of countries so that more people today live in free market democracy than ever in the history of the world.

The memorial service was conducted by Reverend John McKeown and Reverend George A. Koon, nephew namesake of the deceased hero, at the Old Lexington Baptist Church of Leesville. He received full military honors.

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

IN HONOR OF B'NAI ISRAEL AND THE TOWN OF SOUTHBURY, CONNECTICUT, FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, in 1937 the residents of Southbury, a small town in Connecticut, came together to prevent the German American Bund, a group of pro-Nazi German Americans, from establishing a paramilitary training facility in their town.

Led by Rev. Felix Manley of the Southbury Federated Church and Rev. M.E.N. Lindsay of the South Britain Congressional Church, the town of Southbury passed its first zoning law to ban the use of land in Southbury for paramilitary training.

As a great Jewish writer once said, "The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference." Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great sense of pride to represent the town of Southbury, where this May 31, 2008, the congregation of B'nai Israel will host the Human Rights Festival, honoring the courageous acts of those citizens some 71 years ago and renewing the town's commitment to justice. The proud legacy of the religious community in Southbury and the work of B'nai Israel to recognize that legacy serve as a reminder to all of us that change and progress must come from the bottom up.

NBC SHOWS BIAS

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