

Carl Snowden, the director of civil rights in the State Attorney General's Office in Maryland, said this, "She saw other groups that have historically been locked out of the system: women, Latinos, gays. And she felt all of those left out had to have a place at the table."

Gwen Britt was a woman of extraordinary character and courage, and all those she touched during her 66 years on this earth, her beloved family; her sons, who spoke so eloquently at her funeral; her husband, who himself was a Freedom Rider, who himself was a great warrior and advocate for justice in the civil rights movement.

The State of Maryland and our Nation have been enriched by her actions and her leadership, as a young person, as a State Senator, as a neighbor, as a friend.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to extend my condolences to Gwen's husband of 46 years, Travis; her two sons, Travis, Jr., and John; and all of her family and many friends.

We will miss her dearly, although we are comforted that her life and legacy will endure and that she now is at rest in God's hands.

Gwen will live as so many before, in the hearts and minds of those she impressed, of those she motivated, of those she enriched. We will miss Senator Gwen Britt, but our State, our community and our Nation have been made better by her life.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF PATRICIA A. CORBETT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, this morning when I woke up and read the clips from Cincinnati's *The Enquirer*, the headline said, "Cincinnati Philanthropist Dies." It should have read, "Cincinnati's Best Friend Dies." We have lost a great friend of the arts, Patricia Corbett.

When we say the name Patricia Corbett in Cincinnati, we don't have to explain who she is. Her name appears on buildings: the University of Cincinnati Performing Arts building, the Northern Kentucky Arts Performing Center, Music Hall, Riverbend. And in a few short months, the Cincinnati public schools new Performing Arts Center will again bear her name.

But it is not just the buildings that she so actively got involved in and helped build. It's also what she did for the arts itself.

The opera, the symphony, the Pops, the ballet, the May Festival all owe a deep gratitude to the financial support that this woman gave. Her generosity to the arts went beyond the boundaries of Cincinnati.

In my own local town that I grew up in, Loveland, Ohio, we received a Patricia Corbett award, and now we have a

stage company that has a small portion of the arts for our local residents to benefit from.

There are so many people in the newspaper today that talked about what a figure she was. But the one that brought to my mind the most was a woman by the name of Martha Winfrey of Westwood who worked as an usher at Music Hall, and she conveyed the kind of kindness that Patricia Corbett had that we don't know about. At Christmas, she would hand envelopes to the ushers and say, "Just be quiet with these." She had the most prestigious box at Music Hall, Box 5, and when it got crowded, she'd say to Martha, "I don't need to sit here. Let somebody else sit here instead of me," and she'd stand out in the hall and listen to the performance.

She didn't like people to know how old she was. I'm going to be kind and not tell you, since my own mother never wanted anyone to know how old she was. But we were blessed for many years to have Patricia Corbett be our gracious benefactor.

It is said over \$65 million from the Corbetts were given to enrich the lives of the citizens of greater Cincinnati. I was one of those citizens that benefited not from just her generosity, but her kindness. I had the pleasure to meet her on several occasions. Her warm smile, her gentle hand will be a lasting memory.

A few weeks ago, we lost Joni Herschede, another friend of the arts. And now we've lost the Grande Dame. I only hope that they are in heaven enjoying the harps of the angels and that they will continue to smile down on us in Cincinnati.

#### THE TIME FOR EARMARK REFORM HAS ARRIVED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the American people are tired of spending-as-usual here in Washington, DC, especially when it comes to earmarking. Now, earmarking, for the uninitiated, is a process in Congress which has expanded greatly over the last 15 years under Republican control of Congress and, as we saw last year, under Democrat control of Congress. It is where Members of Congress oftentimes, for perfectly meritorious and honorable reasons, request specific projects for their districts. But the American people know that something has gone wrong with the Federal budget process system, and the time for earmark reform has arrived.

This past weekend I'm pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that House Republicans gathered in West Virginia and came together around a bipartisan challenge. We called on Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats to join us in a timeout on earmarking in Washington, DC.

House Republicans united behind a challenge for an earmark moratorium and the establishment of a new select committee that would engage in the kind of thoughtful analysis and hearings where we could truly change the way we spend the people's money.

When you are flying an airplane and the gauges start to tell you something is wrong with the engines, the first thing you do, Mr. Speaker, is put the airplane on the ground. Then you get under the hood and you figure out what is wrong.

Well, I have to tell you that the explosion of earmarks under Republican control in the past years and the inclusion of hundreds of unexamined earmarks in last year's omnibus bill, dropped in at the last minute under the color of darkness, are evidence that the gauge lights are going off.

We need to call a timeout, have a moratorium on earmark spending here in the Congress while we can come together, men and women, Republicans and Democrats, and figure out how we restore public confidence in the way we spend the people's money.

By challenging Speaker PELOSI and the House majority to join us in ending earmarks as usual in Washington, DC, House Republicans have thrown down the gauntlet of reform.

And I believe that while I still think our side should embrace an immediate moratorium on earmarks and lead by example, I applaud my colleagues for finding that common ground among Republicans wherein we can challenge, in a spirit of bipartisanship, our colleagues to join us.

Now, I still maintain nothing short of a full moratorium followed by public hearings and reform will be sufficient to restore public confidence in congressional appropriations.

But as those debates have gone on, it is amazing to me, Mr. Speaker, to look at the morning headlines here in Washington, DC. It shows you the difference between the Muncie Star Press and newspapers out here. Earmarks are page 1, the focus on the "President's sudden severity is drawing bipartisan criticism." Roll Call says, "Earmarks Still Roil GOP," and the Politico, not to be outdone, repeats the exact same headline: "Earmark Debate Roils GOP Ranks."

It is only in Washington, DC, where one party engages in a vigorous debate about how we restore public confidence in the Federal budget process that the focus then is on the debate of the party that wants to bring about change because the sound of silence from the Democrat majority is deafening.

Now, while Republicans are having a vigorous debate, and I'm still one of the people that believes that our party should even go farther, that we should embrace a 1-year moratorium, I have advocated that among my colleagues and will continue to. But nevertheless, it is remarkable to me that the Washington press corps is more interested in discussions among Republicans who

have arrived at a consensus challenging the governing majority to join us in an earmark moratorium than they are interested in the response of the majority who hold the reins of power.

I mean, headlines attest to a vigorous debate among the minority and dead silence among the majority.

And I must tell you, it has to be frustrating, Mr. Speaker, to millions of Americans who long for a Congress that will put integrity and the restoration of public confidence in the Federal budget above partisan differences.

So I say to my colleagues on the other side, what is your response to our challenge for an immediate moratorium on all earmark spending? What will Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats decide at their conference retreat this week?

My hope is as our challenge sits now on the table and is met with stark silence from the Democrats, that as your party meets, Mr. Speaker, as you consider how we can restore public confidence, that Democrats will join Republicans in an immediate earmark moratorium so we can put our fiscal house in order and restore public confidence.

#### 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 10 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR) at noon.

#### PRAYER

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

All-powerful and ever-living God, direct Your love and highest inspirations within us.

Congress stands today between days of retreat for both Republican and Democrat Members of the House. May these days of reflection and planning be blessed with clarity of vision and unified resolve.

Filled with gratitude for the people and the many gifts bestowed upon this Nation, help them to be attuned not only to the problems and questions of Your people, but empower them to build upon their strengths and their hopes for the future.

You alone can lift Your servants above self-interest and fractured alliances to create a renewed solidarity that will bring this Nation to unity and peace.

Only by discerning such gifts within ourselves, Lord, can we bring the seed

of promise to others. For we place our trust not in money nor in munitions, but in the meaning You bring to Your people, now and forever.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CUELLAR 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.

#### SUPPORT ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

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

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the bipartisan economic stimulus plan that will help strengthen our Nation's economy and help millions of American taxpayers and their families.

In my congressional district, the median household income is \$36,000, and those families face rising prices in utilities, food, and health insurance, which stretch their monthly budgets to nearly the breaking point.

Also, nearly 39 percent of these households are headed by single mothers living below the poverty level, who struggle to feed and clothe their children with limited budgets, as they are the sole earners.

The stimulus package will provide at least \$900 to single mothers and their families, which helps alleviate their burden.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to support the bipartisan economic stimulus plan, and I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us today in supporting this legislation.

#### THE CHINESE CROCODILE

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Chinese attack on the Christian faith continues. For 60 days, the Chinese Government has held Shi Weiham, a Christian bookstore owner, in secret detention for praying.

As China readies for the 2008 Summer Olympics, it is trying to convince crit-

ics that it embraces religious freedom. But China is secretly moving religious believers to the dark, damp, hidden hideaway of jail.

China restricts all religious practice to state-sanctioned churches and certain places of worship. So Chinese don't dare pray or worship anywhere else, or off to jail they go. That is what happened to Shi Weiham.

China's religious tolerance is a public relations campaign draped in hypocrisy. China arrests thousands of Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists each year.

As religion is being attacked across atheistic Communist China, we should recall Winston Churchill's words about communism: "A communist is like a crocodile, when it opens its mouth, you cannot tell whether it is trying to smile or preparing to eat you up." The Chinese crocodile is devouring religious freedom among its people.

And that's just the way it is.

#### PERMANENT FIX FOR FISA

(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 to call on the Democrat majority to pass a permanent fix to our Nation's foreign surveillance law and give our intelligence community the tools they need to protect American families.

It has been 6 months since this body passed a temporary patch to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. If Congress fails to pass a permanent fix, our Nation's intelligence community will once again be limited in their ability to track terrorists and defeat their efforts to murder Americans.

In his State of the Union address last night, President Bush reiterated to Members of both parties that the time to act is now. On this most important of issues, we owe it to the American people not to put American families at risk.

We can all agree that the safety and well-being of our Nation's families is our utmost priority, so let's work together on an agreement that will ensure that we meet the challenge of defending our Nation for the long term. Our enemies will not hesitate to exploit our intelligence loopholes. It is imperative that we not give them that opportunity.

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

#### DEMOCRATS REFORM EARMARK PROCESS

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

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, 7 years into his Presidency, President Bush is finally urging reform of the earmark process. He is a little late.