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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Divine source of life and love, to whom all nations are accountable and each person is uniquely worthy of attention and care, be with the Members of Congress today. Guide them in their negotiations and decisions. Make of them Your custodian of the Nation, leading to unity and stability.

Meanwhile, Lord, show Your mercy and grant Your healing power to all the sick and all those in recovery. In such human weakness, reveal Your strength of faith, both to sustain their own hope and for their families. In their darkest moments, manifest Your presence, surround them with love, and assist them with the best of medical care. Restore them to health that they may serve in the building of Your kingdom all the days of their lives. 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

SAVING AMERICAN HOMES

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

Mr. KUCINICH. According to today's Wall Street Journal, moodys-economy.com claims that nearly 5 million families could lose their homes to foreclosure between 2009 and 2011. Now is the time for our government to take a controlling interest in mortgage-backed securities, and then direct loan modification, lowering principal and interest rates, extending terms of payment, keeping people in their homes.

Banks are not lending money; they are hoarding money, because they fear their own balance sheets understate their losses. Instead of giving the banks more of taxpayers' money in the hopes that banks will loan the money to keep people in their homes, the government must take charge to save the homes of so many American families, again, take a controlling interest in mortgage-backed securities and direct loan modification. Keep people in their homes. The banks will get their money as well. It is time to stand up for the dream of American home ownership by saving the homes that are in jeopardy.

A REAL STIMULUS PACKAGE

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. My constituents are outraged at Washington's reckless spending, and they insist this jumbo government giveaway won't stimulate the economy, won't help them find good jobs, won't keep a roof over their head, and won't help them pay the bills.

I am deeply concerned the government keeps writing checks that our children and grandchildren cannot cash. We must know who is going to

pay for all this. Our constituents deserve much better. Taxpayers should not be exposed to even more risks.

Many have been hurting from the economic crunch; yet experts project most of this stimulus spending won't happen until after 2010, years into our recession. That will not help struggling America right now.

I think our country would benefit from a real stimulus package that boosts our lagging economy with job creation, tax relief, and smart, targeted spending. Let's work together to get this done right for America.

SOLAR IN THE ECONOMIC STIMULUS

(Ms. GIFFORDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GIFFORDS. Mr. Speaker, a strong solar power industry creates good jobs and widespread economic growth. It increases our energy independence and reduces the threat of global warming. Unfortunately, the economic downturn has caused many energy investors to put their projects on hold. They are unable to take advantage of the investment tax credit that we fought so hard to pass and extend last year.

To get these projects moving again, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allows solar energy developers to take grants in lieu of tax credits. But for the grant program to be an incentive for the largest renewable energy programs, it has to be expanded. Simply put, renewable projects will not get off the starting line until there is a usable incentive waiting for them at the finish line.

As the conferees work to finalize this bill, I urge them to expand these grants. This will safeguard the solar industry's ability to fully contribute to

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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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our economic recovery. I commend the excellent work done on the energy provisions in this bill and greatly appreciate the conferees' willingness to work to make them as effective as possible.

THERE ARE BETTER SOLUTIONS

(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, our friends on the other side of the aisle continue to frame the stimulus debate as between doing what they want or doing nothing at all. This is simply not the case, as even the Washington Post reported today.

Since the very beginning of this economic crisis and from day one of this Congress, House Republicans have worked to develop proposals that promote job creation. Our solutions provide immediate relief to American families, small businesses, real estate recovery, and homeowners. Our solutions aim at creating jobs. We can create twice the jobs at half the spending. We can bring our set of proposals to the table in a spirit of bipartisanship. We have done so in recognition of the fact that millions of Americans are in financial distress. We must not keep quiet when we know there are solutions that can create jobs without burdening our children with even greater debt and threatening destructive inflation.

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

THE BEST SOCIAL PROGRAM IS A JOB

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, the best social program is a job. A job provides a person not only wages but also confidence in themselves and their future.

Over the last 4 months of the Bush administration, the U.S. economy hemorrhaged jobs, over 2 million from August to December 2008. In Connecticut, one of our largest employers, Mohegan Sun, suspended construction in September of a one-half billion dollar addition and, as a result, carpenters, electricians, sheet metal workers, and the entire construction trades are now barely getting by collecting unemployment.

We have a choice in the Congress in the next few days—to support President Obama and pass his Recovery Act, putting thousands of construction workers back to work building roads, bridges, and green energy buildings; or we can listen to the Do Nothing Herbert Hoover crowd who want to trip up our new President only a few weeks in office who is only trying to clean up the mess he inherited.

I say vote "yes" for jobs, and tell the Do Nothing crowd, as they say in the

military: Lead, follow, or get out of the way.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

(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, this big government spending plan being called a stimulus is deeply flawed and being rushed through Congress with little regard for the consequences.

Take a look at some of the provisions, including \$1.1 billion in spending to prepare the country for socialized medicine. Under the guise of economic stimulus, the bill creates a Council for Comparative Effectiveness, which amounts to government bureaucracy deciding what is best for your health care based on cost averages, not what is best for each individual sick patient.

President Obama's health care advisers have made clear that this is part of their overall plan to move toward universal government-run health care.

People don't want socialized medicine in this country. This has nothing to do with creating jobs and getting our economy back on track.

Using this so-called stimulus bill to move the country towards the agenda of the left is wrong. First the bailout, now the stimulus, millions of dollars in pork. Enough is enough.

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS

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

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to bring to everyone's attention something that is on everyone's mind: Jobs, jobs, jobs.

America needs to get back to work, because without a job you can't pay off your mortgage, without a job you can't pay your health care bills. We need jobs in this country. How can we get that done?

I think it is time that we treat small business on Main Street the same way the past administration treated their friends on Wall Street, and that is with the number "zero." Zero percent interest. If the Federal funds rate of zero percent is good for their friends on Wall Street and between bank lending, maybe that is the number that small businesses ought to get on Main Street.

When credit is available to small businesses, we can generate millions and millions of new higher wage jobs. Let's treat Main Street like the past administration treated Wall Street.

HUGO CHAVEZ'S QUEST FOR POWER

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

Mr. MACK. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, the Venezuelan people will go to

the polls to determine the future of freedom and democracy in their country. Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, in his continued quest for power, is demanding that the people of Venezuela get rid of presidential term limits.

Chavez has just celebrated 10 years in power, and his legacy is clear: Higher poverty, more crime, rampant inflation, growing anti-Semitism, less freedom, alliances with Iran, Russia, and Cuba, and a loss of hope and opportunity for the Venezuelan people.

Mr. Speaker, Venezuelans cannot afford to have Chavez leading them into the Communist abyss. Today, I am introducing a resolution calling upon the Members of the House to stand for free and fair elections this weekend in Venezuela. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the important resolution and to stand with the Venezuelan people in their fight for freedom from the iron fist of Hugo Chavez.

A MELTDOWN OF CONFIDENCE

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, over the past few months we have seen not only a financial meltdown, but also a meltdown of confidence. People we had worshiped, people who ran huge businesses, people we had considered experts proved to be simply Wizards of Oz. We pulled back the curtain and found they were as flawed and fallible as the rest of us. And now we have an economy that gets worse from day to day.

Each of us has stood here and preached about what steps we think will fix our economy. We have heard Members who have never worked in the private sector talk about how to create jobs; we have heard people who can't balance their own checkbooks talk about admonishing bankers; and we have heard the head of the Republican Party incomprehensibly say, "Work is not a job."

None of us has confidence that everything in the economic recovery package will work; but we should all realize that unless the American people have confidence that we are working together, the odds of its success are greatly diminished.

I urge all my colleagues to forget their political calculations, calculate the consequences of failure to our country, and support the only plan available for fixing our economy.

A STIMULUS FOR MAIN STREET

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, you know, this Nation is in a recession, and our constituents are absolutely outraged with what they see happening in this House. They want action. But they do not want the Democrat stimulus bill