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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR of Arizona).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 5, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ED PASTOR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

As people of faith, Lord God Eternal, we believe that Your Spirit fills the whole world. Moved by this faith, we try to discern authentic signs of Your presence and purpose in the events, the needs, and the longings which we share with other people all the time.

Lord, thank You for faith, because faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal to which You have called each Member of Congress and each citizen of this great Nation.

Guide minds into great collaboration and move hearts toward true solutions which transcend ideology and reach the fullest depths of human potential, bringing us into a greater union with others and with You. Then, as Your free children, we will conquer the problems which confront us, and give You glory, 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 gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California 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 a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 520. An act to designate the United States courthouse under construction at 327 South Church Street, Rockford, Illinois, as the "Stanley J. Roszkowski United States Courthouse".

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 10 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

TAPPING INTO THE POTENTIAL OF FUTURE GENERATIONS OF WOMEN

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, in 1987 the United States Congress officially designated March as Women's History Month in an effort to not only increase public knowledge of women's history, but also to raise the public consciousness of the

impact that women have on our country.

Over the last century, we have made considerable progress. However, our work to ensure that women have equal rights and protection from assault and abuse are not over. Today, women continue to bring home smaller paychecks than men do for doing the same job. However, I am proud that this Congress passed and President Obama recently signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 to help end pay discrimination against women.

Currently, there are an estimated 198,000 women serving on active duty in our military, and still we are unable to provide them with a safe environment, free of sexual assault and violence. In addition, approximately 800,000 individuals are trafficked across international borders each year, and, sadly, 80 percent of those are women and girls.

While we recognize the progress we have made, we must not be complacent, but instead work together to tap into the potential of future generations of women.

LESS IS MORE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, under the new tax proposal, those that make over \$250,000 are going to have a massive tax increase so the government can redistribute that money to special groups. Those in this high tax group already pay most of the taxes and create most of the new jobs in small business.

But we have got a problem. These same folks are considering cutting back their work productivity so they make less than \$250,000. According to ABC News, some individuals who own business also are going to downsize because of the tax increase.

A lawyer in Louisiana says, "Why kill yourself working if it is given

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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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away to people who aren't working as hard?"

A dentist in Colorado said she is going to work fewer days, see fewer patients and eliminate employees so she can be underneath the tax increase. She says, "If I am going to be working just to give it back to the government, it is demoralizing."

Mr. Speaker, this cannot be. What are we to do if all these small business owners start following this downsizing plan, lay off employees and don't send more money to Washington? Don't they know they can't do that? Don't they know that they need to pay more taxes to take care of the rest of us?

Mr. Speaker, all citizens pay enough income tax already. It is absurd to raise taxes on anybody during this recession.

And that's just the way it is.

WORKING TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, President Obama has said "our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness." Yet there are those that are full of hate and anti-immigration rhetoric that cannot see the rich contributions immigrants have made to this country.

Racial profiling in my district alone is alarming and the controversy of enforcement practices must be investigated. We will not stand for enforcement-only approaches that create a mistrust of law enforcement amongst the public. We need comprehensive immigration reform that addresses the real issues, respects families and includes enforcement and security of our Nation.

Congress needs to be proactive on this issue, instead of reactive to the negative few who preach enforcement-only failed approaches.

I urge my colleagues with the help of the CHC to have President Obama and Speaker PELOSI work towards comprehensive immigration reform.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF FRED PIERNO, JR.

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

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Martin County Fire Medic Fred Pierno, Jr. Freddy is the only member of the Martin County Fire Rescue to ever die in the line of duty. He lived a life of service to his community and country. He was a Navy veteran during the Vietnam War and served for 20 years with Martin County Fire Rescue. His fellow firefighters enjoyed working by his side and he always put others first.

It was in 2006 while trying to save the life of a patient that he contracted hepatitis C. Firefighters and medics like Freddy put their lives on the line day

in and day out and face dangers that can't always be seen. Freddy is only the 13th firefighter in the United States to die in the line of duty from this virus.

We honor Fred Pierno's sacrifice to the people of Martin County. He will truly be missed.

FIXING THE BROKEN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Today, the President will convene a health summit as he continues to engage experts, Members of Congress, health providers and consumer advocates in what is one of many discussions on how to best fix our broken health care system and ensure access to quality health care for every American more efficiently and effectively.

We have already made a great down payment with the expanded SCHIP, the Medicaid and other provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We in this body continue to work with our President through our omnibus bill; and as we prepare to develop a 2010 budget, we do so in a holistic way, also addressing the social determinants of our health, which is critical in order for us to meet our obligation to close the gaps in health that cause premature preventive illness and death in the poor and people of color and those in our rural areas.

We must remember that health care is a right.

PUTTING COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH FIRST

(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, it is so interesting to go home on the weekends and visit with all of my constituents. This past weekend, some of them said, I feel like everything that I am hearing from the leadership in D.C. is focused on fear and envy to push their agenda.

The President's budget is just big government reinvented. Here it is, the era of enormous big government. It expands government spending past the traditional no more than 20 percent of GDP that we have always expected, and it is going into the stratosphere. Programs are piled on top of each other to give us what is now a \$3.55 trillion budget that has come from this Democrat administration. And the deficits? \$1 trillion as far as the eye can see. And this is on top of the stimulus, the omnibus, the "Housing-us" bills, that are just ripping through this Chamber at speeds that would make my NASCAR drivers dizzy.

You know, some of my constituents suspect that the leadership in this House actually is choosing to confuse

the issues. They know you cannot spend your way to recovery.

GARDEN STREET LOFTS IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY, HONORED BY SUSTAINABLE BUILDING INDUSTRY COUNCIL

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

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Sustainable Building Industry Council honored the Garden Street Lofts in Hoboken, New Jersey, at their Beyond Green High Performance Buildings Awards. I am proud of the accomplishments of MAST Construction and all those involved in the project. I am pleased that their important work has been recognized.

The Garden Street Lofts project, completed last November, successfully converted an 80-year-old warehouse into a "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" silver-certified building with 30 loft-style residences and over 7,000 square feet of retail space. The building also is located within reach of multiple forms of public transportation, further increasing its appeal and environmental benefits.

I commend this sustainable project, and I thank the Sustainable Building Industry Council for including it in its Beyond Green Awards program. MAST Construction continues to provide the 13th Congressional District of New Jersey with exceptional facilities. It is my hope that the Garden Street Lofts will serve as a successful example for other developers.

ENDING NO-BID CONTRACTS IN THE FEDERAL PROCUREMENT PROCESS

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, President Obama announced an initiative yesterday to fix the Federal procurement process. He wants to make sure that there are no more no-bid contracts.

Now, this is a welcome move. But if the President really wants to get serious about ending no-bid contracts, he should veto the omnibus spending bill we are just about to send him. It contains thousands of no-bid contracts for private companies. If the President can't see fit to veto the omnibus, he should at a minimum commit to veto future legislation that contains no-bid contracts.

Again, a congressional earmark for a private company is nothing more than a no-bid contract. What is worse, many of these congressionally directed no-bid contracts go to companies whose executives and their lobbyists turn around and make campaign contributions to those who secured the earmark or no-bid contract.

This morning we will be voting on a privileged resolution to investigate earmarks and campaign contributions