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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 11, 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:

The freedom we enjoy and defend seems to be rooted in our realization that we are created in Your divine image and redeemed by Your revealed love.

So, we are bold enough to turn to You and speak to You, Lord God, as children who are most secure in knowing ourselves; yet trusting in Your gracious care.

With our childish problems, in a world we have created for ourselves, we ask and we receive. You offer wisdom and counsel. In our adolescent difficulties, we seek and we find ways that You show us and empower us.

Be unto us attentive, gracious and forgiving on another day; that as Your free children we may come to know the fullness of Your presence and 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 Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. SCHWARTZ 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 PRO TEMPORE

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Last week, the White House Forum on Health Reform was a critical step forward ensuring that all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable health care. Particularly important was a growing consensus among all stakeholders that we must reform our health care delivery and financing system to maximize efficiency, improve health care quality and outcomes and contain costs.

President Obama charged us, Members of Congress and all stakeholders, to find a uniquely American solution to this challenge. To contain costs and expand access, we must engage patients in their care and realign our health care system to enhance primary care, to better coordinate care for patients with chronic conditions, to provide for meaningful use of health information technology and to apply clinical best practices, all of which will reduce costs and save lives.

Without these innovations, any effort at expanding health care coverage will

be unsustainable. This work will be difficult and complex. But we are compelled to act, both to meet the needs of millions of uninsured and underinsured Americans and for our economic competitiveness.

NUCLEAR WASTE AND DRINKING WATER

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

Mr. KIRK. Today's Chicago Tribune includes a report by Michael Hawthorne that the administration has decided not to move nuclear waste from the Great Lakes. This leaves thousands of tons of plutonium and other transuranic poisons in outdated storage facilities next to the drinking water of 30 million Americans and millions of Canadians. What would happen if plutonium leaked into the Great Lakes? It would contaminate 95 percent of America's fresh water for thousands of years.

We know that respected scientists would never recommend permanently storing nuclear waste next to major lakes and rivers. But that is what Senator REID got our President to do. Under this administration, 35 States will have to permanently store plutonium and other poisons on the Long Island Sound, in the Mississippi River basin and throughout the Great Lakes. This policy writes the first chapter of an inevitable environmental tragedy of biblical proportions that will hurt our country for a very, very long time.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in many years, this Congress

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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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is moving forward with long overdue legislation to reform our Nation's health care system. With 47 million Americans without health insurance and costs rising well above the rate of inflation, health reform is an issue that can no longer be ignored. Health care affects every individual, every family and every business in America. Less than half of all small businesses in this country can afford to offer health insurance to their employees. Tens of millions of insured Americans live in fear of losing their coverage due to skyrocketing health care costs, and families are one accident or illness away from losing everything.

Together we can put an end to the decades of roadblocks that have prevented meaningful health care reform. Let us not let this opportunity pass us by again.

HURTING AMERICANS SEE TOO MUCH GOVERNMENT SPENDING

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

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, to Speaker NANCY PELOSI, I say American taxpayers, American families, Americans are all hurting. They are getting pink slips. They are seeing job layoffs. They are seeing their wages cut. They are seeing their wages go down. They are seeing their income go down. And what do they see out of this House in Washington they are seeing spending going through the roof. They are seeing 10 percent increases on top of other 10 percent increases. They are seeing more than one-quarter of the Nation's growth and wealth all being sucked right into this Nation's Capital and spent in this city.

Mr. Speaker, the American people did indeed vote for a change. But this is not what they were hoping for.

H.R. 759 WILL ENSURE A SAFE FOOD SUPPLY

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

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I have held nine hearings to examine the safety and security of our Nation's food supply over the past 2 years. A recent peanut butter salmonella outbreak is just the latest in a string of food-borne illnesses that affects 76 million Americans every year. For this reason, I joined with my colleagues, Chairmen DINGELL and PALLONE, to introduce H.R. 759, the Food and Drug Administration Globalization Act of 2009.

H.R. 759 would give the FDA not only the financial resources, but also the regulatory tools to ensure the safety of food we eat and the drugs we take. If this legislation would have been in

place, the FDA would have had the authority, as well as the resources, to prevent the current salmonella outbreak from occurring, tools such as resources for increased inspections, access to inspection records, mandatory recall authority and strong penalties that will require testing facilities to send their results to the FDA.

Congress faces an ambitious agenda in the coming months, but more than 600 illnesses and nine deaths linked to the current salmonella outbreak underscore the importance of wasting no time in enacting this legislation.

EARMARK REFORM

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, in about 1½ hours, President Obama is expected to announce major earmark reforms as he signs an omnibus spending bill with 9,000 earmarks. This gives voice to St. Augustine's lament, give me sobriety—but not yet.

But Mr. Speaker, it is still a good thing. And it is still long overdue. And we still shouldn't have to look to the President to save us from ourselves. This earmark problem is our problem. But gratefully, I believe he will announce, and I hope that he will announce, that he will not sign legislation that will allow no-bid contracts, congressionally directed no-bid contracts, to go into effect. We have seen what that has done to the Congress, the kind of circular fundraising that happens and the campaign contributions that result. And it does not uphold the dignity and decorum of this body.

So I hope we can make major earmark reforms with the President.

MARCH AS RED CROSS MONTH

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate March as Red Cross Month. Since 1943 we have been celebrating March as Red Cross Month to promote the services provided to the public by the Red Cross. The Red Cross has been at the forefront of helping individuals and families prevent, prepare for and respond to large and small-scale disasters for more than 127 years.

Over the last year, more than 5 million people throughout the United States took advantage of educational opportunities from the Red Cross for CPR training, first aid and lifeguard training classes. And in Orange County, California, the local Red Cross chapter places great emphasis on community training. On April 18, the American Red Cross in Orange County will be hosting the fifth annual CPR day at, of course, Angel Stadium in my City of Anaheim, which will train over

1,500 people in adult and child CPR and first aid.

Once again, I want to thank the American Red Cross for making our communities safer and for providing needed resources to communities that are affected by floods, by fires, earthquakes, mudslides, hurricanes and other natural disasters.

THE SCOTT GARDNER ACT

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

Mrs. MYRICK. I recently reintroduced the Scott Gardner Act, which would make it illegal and grounds for mandatory detention and deportation if an illegal alien is caught driving drunk.

Scott Gardner was a beloved father, teacher and husband in my district. And he was tragically killed by an illegal alien driving drunk who remained in our country despite the fact that he had previous DWI convictions. It would aid in the enforcement of our immigration laws by requiring the Federal, State and local governments to all share and collect information during the course of their normal duties. And local law enforcement agencies would have the resources to detain illegal aliens for DWI until they could be transferred to Federal authorities for deportation.

It is a travesty that we in this country allow illegal immigrants to remain here after being found guilty of driving drunk. Some in my district have recently argued that traffic violations are minor offenses. I'm sure Scott Gardner's family and all of the families who have lost loved ones to DWIs would disagree.

STEM-CELL RESEARCH

(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, this week the President took a critical step to boost groundbreaking stem-cell research and restore scientific integrity across government. The President signed an executive order lifting the ban on Federal funding for promising embryonic system cell research. In doing so he affirmed the administration's support of finding cures for diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, heart disease and diabetes that cause pain and suffering all over the world.

Many thoughtful and decent people are conflicted about or are strongly opposed to this research. The President understands their concern and respects their point of view. That is why the administration will develop and rigorously enforce strict ethical guidelines with zero tolerance for misuse and abuse. This order does not open the door for cloning for human reproduction in any way. We are all opposed to