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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 25, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ELLEN O. TAUSCHER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Rev. Earl F. Palmer, National Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

O God, Our Father, we begin this day with gratitude and resolve. We give thanks for those who are privileged to serve in this place of study, deliberation, decisions and history. We are grateful for our Republic of citizens, young and old, their cities and States, farms and villages—a people who by their work and dreams give motivation and energy to what happens here in this House of Representatives.

As we begin this day, we claim, O God, Your gift of truth and grace: for truth that bears the imprint of integrity and honesty and for Your grace that forgives us when harm happens and healing is needed to keep us whole.

We ask for the wisdom, courage and respect that build friendships among these leaders who guide our land. Grant us the hope that encourages through morning, afternoon, and evening hours because of Your love and faithfulness. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

Mr. COSTA 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.

WELCOMING REV. EARL F. PALMER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, our guest chaplain today represents a convergence of two Washingtons. Rev. Earl Palmer is from Washington State and recently retired as the senior pastor at University Presbyterian Church in Seattle. Currently, he is the Preaching Pastor in Residence at the National Presbyterian Church here in Washington, D.C., as he also preaches around the country under the nonprofit Earl Palmer Ministries organization.

With degrees from UC-Berkeley and Princeton Theological Seminary, he is the author of 18 books. Rev. Palmer is also one of the leading scholars on the life and works of C.S. Lewis.

Citizens from both Washingtons and many others in the country and in between have benefited from the work of this remarkable man. His love of the Gospel and his enthusiasm for sharing the Gospel are evident in all of his preachings and teachings, as is his basic human kindness.

Shirley, Earl's wife of 50 years, has a Ph.D. from the University of Washington. They have three children and seven grandchildren, some of whom are with us today.

Many lives have been blessed by the life and ministry of Earl Palmer, and it is my honor to help welcome him here today to the House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

DROUGHT IN CALIFORNIA

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

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call for immediate response and Federal action to assist California in the drought crisis that we're facing today. Clearly, the entire Nation is feeling a financial meltdown with home foreclosures and many other challenges we face, but in California, beyond that, we have a drought that also involves a dairy meltdown.

We have reservoirs that are low, Federal allocations that are set at zero in the San Joaquin Valley, which I represent, along with many of my colleagues, 20 percent for State water deliveries. As a result, we could lose as many as 80,000 jobs. The economic impact could be as much as \$2.2 billion in the San Joaquin Valley that we represent.

Small communities have been crippled. Communities that I represent like Mendota and Firebaugh have 36 to 40 percent unemployment. Delano, with over 50,000 people, has over 34 percent unemployment.

Naming a drought task force is helpful but it is not enough. Plain and simple, we don't need words, we need

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water. Federal and State collaboration is urgently needed and needs to be improved to make stimulus funds available for immediate relief and to relax standards that prevent water supplies from going to those who most need it.

We ask for your help to increase the water supply for California's future.

BROOKS CORLEY ATTAINS A BLACK BELT

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

Mr. FLEMING. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak of the extraordinary accomplishment recently of one of my constituents, Albert Brooks Corley.

Brooks has been in my karate class affiliated with the Shreveport Karate Club back in my hometown of Minden, Louisiana, since he was just a little guy. Today, he has grown into a tall, strong young man. After years of hard work, he was recently awarded a first-degree black belt in karate by Sensei Mikami, a karate champion and eighth-degree black belt. Having worked for years to obtain my black belt in Japanese karate, I know the hard work and persistence it takes to obtain this level of martial arts expertise.

Apart from developing into a tough, aggressive and coordinated martial artist, Brooks is a fine young man who is now completing his education in order to be gainfully employed.

Brooks is truly a model by which young people should aspire to achieve the potential that each may obtain. Therefore, I heartily commend him in his recent achievement and the many achievements ahead. Furthermore, I commend his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Corley, for raising such a fine man.

COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK

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

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to bring attention to Cover the Uninsured Week and to encourage the Congress to enact comprehensive health care reform this year.

Our Nation's health care system—which leaves more than 45 million Americans uninsured and millions more underinsured—is badly in need of reform. Practically \$56 billion in uncompensated care for the uninsured is absorbed annually by the health system, driving up the cost of insurance for everyone. Health care costs are consuming more of individuals', families', and businesses' budgets every year and represent the fastest growing piece of the Federal budget.

The economic crisis is also shedding further light on a system that is inefficient, unaffordable and out of reach for too many Americans. Americans can-

not simply wait any longer to ensure greater access to quality affordable health care.

I encourage all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together to enact comprehensive health care reform this year. So during this week, Uninsured Week, when Congress recognizes the plight of those Americans without health insurance, let us strive to provide all Americans with comprehensive, affordable health care now.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET

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

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Madam Speaker, President Barack Obama used a prime time news conference last night to defend his \$3.6 trillion budget plan. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says the President's budget would run up a \$9.3 trillion debt over the next 10 years. This budget spends too much. Middle class families and small businesses are making sacrifices when it comes to their own budgets, yet Washington continues to spend trillions of taxpayers' dollars on bailouts and other government programs.

The budget taxes too much. It contains the largest tax increase in American history. The budget borrows too much. Unchecked spending will result in borrowing hundreds of billions of dollars from China and the Middle East.

Madam Speaker, the American people deserve a responsible budget from their President. This budget will guarantee that our economy will never fully recover.

GROWTH OF GREEN-COLLAR JOBS

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

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, last night President Obama again reaffirmed his commitment to a clean energy policy for America, a policy that will grow millions of new green-collar jobs in this country. And he did it by, again, reaffirming his commitment to a cap-and-trade bill in this Congress this year which will drive investments into these new jobs for the next century.

The reason he is giving so much hope for Americans is that he realizes that we want Americans building the energy-efficient, partially and fully electric cars so we can sell those cars to China, so we can make the solar cells and sell them to Korea, so we can make wind turbines and sell them to Denmark.

It is this vision of Barack Obama that is going to help grow jobs in this country. And when we pass this cap-and-trade bill, two things are going to happen: money is going to go back to the American consumers to help them

buy these energy-efficient products, and we are going to create millions of new jobs.

That is a Barack Obama hope for the future, and it is going to come to pass.

WASHINGTON MUST MAKE SACRIFICES

(Mr. LEE of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LEE of New York. Madam Speaker, every day western New Yorkers tell me what sacrifices they are making during these tough economic times. I wish the same could be said for Washington.

This Congress has already missed two opportunities to impose fiscal restraint with the stimulus and the omnibus spending bills. Now the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office tells us that the administration's budget proposal will produce \$9.3 trillion in budget deficits over the next 10 years. As this chart demonstrates, that amount represents more than two-and-a-half times the budget deficits of the prior administration, which in itself was faulted for spending too much.

Taxpayers will be stuck paying more than \$1 trillion in interest payments on this excessive borrowing. Today's red ink will bring impossible choices for our children and our grandchildren.

We need to make Washington do more with less, just as western New Yorkers have for many years.

HONORING THE LIVES OF OAKLAND POLICE OFFICERS SERGEANT ERVIN ROMANS AND MARK DUNAKIN

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

Mr. McNERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor four police officers who gave their lives in the line of duty in a tragic shooting in Oakland this past weekend.

I join all of Northern California in mourning their loss and honoring their sacrifice.

Two of these brave officers lived in my district. Sergeant Ervin Romans of Danville, California, was a member of the SWAT team and had served with the Oakland Police Department for 13 years. He was a recipient of the department's Medal of Valor for bravery. Erv, as he was known, leaves behind his wife and three children.

Sergeant Mark Dunakin of Tracy served with the Oakland Police Department for 18 years. He was known and respected as a passionate guardian of public safety. Sergeant Dunakin grew up in Pleasanton and is survived by his wife and three children.

These heroic officers dedicated their lives so that we might live in safety. My thoughts and prayers are with their families and their loved ones during this difficult time.