



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2009

No. 69

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Lord God, ever faithful and mindful of all our deeds, the people of this country are truly grateful for the daily work of our Nation's Federal, State and local government employees. Their dedication and sacrifice are commemorated this week as we mark the 25th anniversary of Public Service Recognition Week.

Bless, protect and answer the prayers of all these public servants who provide service in every city and county across America. So often we take them for granted for keeping our streets and water supply clean and safe, delivering our mail, and other administrative and labor-intensive work for the benefit of our lives and the lives of our children.

As we lift them and their families in our prayers today, we prayerfully beg You to encourage others to commit themselves wholeheartedly to public service. Make our country strong by this work of the people, for the people, and by the people.

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 Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE of Texas 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 SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland). The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HOUSING CRISIS

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, the current housing crisis has had devastating consequences for homeowners in communities throughout New Jersey and the country. Our Nation is faced with the highest foreclosure rate in 25 years. Millions of families may lose their homes to foreclosure this year because too many lenders approved loans that homeowners could not afford to pay.

By passing H.R. 1728, the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act of 2009, we have an opportunity to curb abusive and predatory lending. Specifically, the bill outlaws many of the destructive industry practices that marked the subprime lending boom in the first place. It also establishes a simple standard for all home loans, ensuring that borrowers can repay loans they are sold. Finally, it protects tenants who rent homes that go into foreclosure.

This legislation marks a critical step in the rebuilding process of our economy while providing the American consumers with the protection they deserve. For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTH KOREA

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, last week, the Congressional Human Rights

Commission met with defectors from North Korea and we heard firsthand how the people of North Korea continue to suffer terribly at the hands of the cruel dictatorship there.

It is vital that the international community and the United States take more specific, deliberate action aimed at helping the suffering people of North Korea. There are numerous reports of the suffering going on inside North Korea; prison camps, severe torture, slave labor, forced abortions, and almost certain death for those who have tried to escape and have been forced to return.

The U.S. Congress passed the North Korea Human Rights Act to provide a stronger foundation for the U.S. to help the North Korean people. Unfortunately, that act has not been implemented to the fullest extent possible.

The North Korean people need to hear the message that they are not alone, that they are not forgotten, and that there are many in the United States and around the world who deeply care about their plight and are working to help them.

We look forward to the day when we can visit a free North Korea and see the people living with human rights and dignity.

CONSUMERS UNION POLL

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

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, a recent Consumers Union Poll states that 71 percent of Americans support health care reform that provides health care to all Americans. They also told us why. Sixty-four percent of those polled had concerns that they weren't able to afford a doctor in the last year. Sixty percent of them were afraid they were going to go into bankruptcy because of unforeseen medical expenses. And they also had a good

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5171

idea as to the path forward because out of 66 percent of those polled, two-thirds supported the ability to choose a public insurance option, the ability to choose whether they want to stay on their private plan or whether they want to go on to a potentially better quality, more affordable public plan.

They have told us they don't want politicians making the choice for them, that they themselves want to choose whether they are better off in the private or public market.

CLEAN ENERGY WITHOUT TAX HIKES

(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. Madam Speaker, I am grateful to be part of a bipartisan group in Congress that is putting forward new and innovative solutions to our energy needs.

The American Conservation and Clean Energy Independence Act introduced this week is spearheaded by Congressmen TIM MURPHY and NEIL ABERCROMBIE. It is legislation that would promote the energy sector to start creating jobs immediately. It does not raise taxes on American families.

This strategy promotes the development of cleaner energy and more efficiency. It encourages conservation. It utilizes the vast proven natural resources we have here in America to not only help address our current energy needs but help fund the development of the next generation of energy resources.

High gas prices and home heating costs threaten the budgets of American families. With this comprehensive strategy, we address those high costs and our environmental concerns while creating jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

CONDITIONS ON AID TO AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee has come under some harsh criticism for suggesting the money we make available to Afghanistan and Pakistan be conditioned. Chairman OBEY is right. When you consider the fact that we have put \$33 billion into Afghanistan and \$12 billion into Pakistan without conditions, you have to ask "What has it gotten us?"

We seem to be losing the war in Afghanistan because the leadership of the enemy has a haven in Pakistan. Of all the money we have given to the military in Pakistan, they have 450,000 trained, equipped troops on the south-

ern border with our ally India and one brigade on the north where we need them. Former members of the ISI affiliated with the Pak army located just south of Lahore, Pakistan trained and executed a massacre of 152 people in Mumbai, India.

They just released an extremist cleric that is arguing for sharia law across the land. They have just allowed the Swat Valley to be taken over by the Taliban. Of course we need our money conditioned. If they want American taxpayers' money, they need to start serving America's interests.

□ 1015

THE HIGH SEAS NEEDS THE SECOND AMENDMENT

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, recently three boats of the Somali pirates gave chase on the high seas toward a lone ship of prey, ready once again to capture an unarmed vessel and the crew, and hold them hostage until the ransom is paid.

As the smiling armed outlaws sped toward the game and readied the attack, the target appeared to flee as it headed away into the horizon of the sun.

But to the dismay of the bold bandits, they were trapped. The supposed merchant ship dispatched two boats that headed directly for the malcontents of robbery. Aboard were French commandos. The alleged merchant ship was a ship of the French Navy. Shots were fired over the criminals, and in minutes the 11 pirates of misfortune were captured and stowed away in the darkness of the French brig.

Madam Speaker, it defies reason that merchant ships are not armed. The international maritime community should arm their ships against the pirates of prey. The French and American Navies cannot save them every day. Let the philosophy of the Second Amendment, "right to bear arms", apply on the high seas.

And that's just the way it is.

THE CAPITOL POWER PLANT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I know the Republican leadership has opposed, even mocked, the Speaker's determination that the House lead by example by greening the Capitol. Helping each office reduce its carbon footprint, eliminate waste, and save money is exactly what Americans want from their leaders.

But last night's attack on the floor of the House by my Republican colleagues on the conversion of the Capitol Power Plant from coal to natural gas was bizarre. That Capitol Power

Plant is the number one source of pollution in the District of Columbia. We've reduced the carbon pollution 50 percent, 95 percent of the sulfur oxide, at least 50 percent of the carbon monoxide, reducing a serious problem for the respiratory health of the District of Columbia's children.

I hope that people in their zeal to score political points don't get unhinged. This is important business. We're moving in the right direction, and we ought to be able to understand these basic facts.

CAP-AND-TAX

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, we are learning that the Environmental Protection Agency is poised to declare any body or company or plant that emits more than 25,000 tons of carbon dioxide as a major emitter. A body of 435 adults all endlessly emitting hot air certainly will meet that annual threshold.

It appears that the EPA and Congress are literally in a race to see who can get there first. Are we going to tax the air we breathe, or are we going to regulate the air we breathe? If CO₂ and other greenhouse gases are so dangerous to our environment, the American people truly must be puzzled by the actions of the body this week.

While the details of a cap-and-tax system are negotiated behind closed doors, Congress has debated such staggering important work as supporting the goals of Public Service Recognition Week and National Train Day. If our environment were truly in serious peril that could only be effectively addressed by a cap-and-tax system, one would think we would be burning our carbon credits debating that bill, not the suspensions we have passed.

JUMP-STARTING THE CLEAN ENERGY SECTOR THROUGH ENERGY-EFFICIENT BUILDINGS

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, after years of neglect, President Obama and the new Congress are taking on the Nation's energy crisis. This Congress is now making the tough decisions necessary to move the country in a new direction, create green jobs and build a clean energy economy.

Conserving energy by turning around our economy will require the help and participation of every American. The good news is that everyone can save money and help grow a clean energy economy. We can use less and save more by using energy-efficient weatherization technologies and appliances in our buildings. Consumers can save hundreds off their energy bills by using