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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,
May 14, 2009.

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

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord God, purveyor of all human events and Father of the ages, the times in which we live cause Your people to be filled with anxiety and hesitant to trust.

Make the Members of Congress strong in their defense of the most vulnerable in our midst, to inspire light in our darkness.

Make them bold in upholding moral principles and determined to do what is right for the Nation's stability, without feeling self-righteous or fearful of personal consequences because of their unified purpose to do what is best for this country.

If the times ask much of us, Lord, enable us to make sacrifices or to take risks that will ensure a better future for Your people.

Help us to stand strong because we place all our trust in You. 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 Washington (Mr. LARSEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

IT'S TIME FOR AMERICA TO COME HOME

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, the American people have a right to know or ask what's going on here. We have trillions of dollars for war, trillions of dollars for Wall Street, and trillions of dollars for health insurance companies; but now we hear we have less money for Social Security and less money for Medicare. Is there a connection?

We must begin restoring our Nation by restoring the peace. And we begin today when we defeat the supplemental appropriation that keeps us in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Democrats were elected on a promise to end the war in Iraq; we are continuing it. Democrats were elected to get us out of Afghanistan; the war is escalating. And to top it all off, Members of Congress, we have a rule, it's in

the rule, which keeps Guantanamo open, keeps the prisoners there, despite the fact that many of them may have had their basic rights violated.

It's time for America to come home, start paying attention to creating jobs, health care, education, retirement security, investor security.

It's time for us to start paying attention here instead of running around the world trying to tell other people how to live.

SOCIAL SECURITY

(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. Madam Speaker, a new report shows Social Security is a lot worse off than predicted. It's time for Congress to find real solutions to the Nation's ailing retirement safety net. The trustees' report predicts an even gloomier forecast than last year due to the economic downturn and the beginning retirement wave of the baby boomer generation.

The President and Majority Leader HOYER have rightly called for action to bolster Social Security's future. Congress must respond now by finding a solution.

As the lead Republican tasked with handling Social Security, I stand ready and willing to join Democrats and Republicans to get the job done now. The longer we delay, the more drastic Social Security's adjustments will be, the greater the burden will be on future generations, and the more detrimental the impact on our national economy.

Americans want, need, and deserve a Social Security system that works.

AMERICA'S ADDICTION TO OIL

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

☐ 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.



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Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, immediately after the President announced his intention to turn America into a 21st century green economy, the special interests began lobbying to keep America addicted to oil.

We were told there's no urgency to change, no threat to the planet from the ongoing and massive releases of carbon into the atmosphere, and that we should pump every drop of oil out of every foreign country regardless of how many wars we need to wage to satisfy our addiction.

Just remember this: The special interests want to keep us addicted to oil because that is in their interests, not ours, not America's best interests.

We have an Administration that recognizes and is responding to the global crisis, and Congress needs to support the President with legislation that will cure America of its addiction to oil and save the planet in the process.

Time indeed is running out, and we have before us the evidence and the legislative proposals to remake America into a clean and energy-independent economy. It's time to act while there's still time to have air to breathe.

ENERGY PUNISHMENT TAX

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, somewhere in the prohibited, cold corridors of the darkened back rooms of this castle, the Capitol, in places unknown, unseen, and unheard of by the public, the new Federal taxcrats are carefully crafting the energy punishment tax.

This \$646 billion tax is aimed at punishing Americans and businesses for using any type of energy. The idea is we should not only feel guilty for using energy, we should pay for our energy sins by being taxed on consumption.

So the taxcrats are going to double the cost of natural gas and home heating oil by taxing the use of it. Use natural gas or home heating oil in your home to keep warm in the winter, you're going to be hit with the keeping warm tax.

Electricity costs are going to increase by 73 percent; so be careful about turning on the AC. It's going to cost you more with the keeping cool tax.

Taxes on gasoline will go up 50 percent. Don't drive your car unless you want to pay the new driving tax.

Americans are taxed enough already. The government should not tax us back to a Stone Age existence with the new absurd energy punishment tax.

And that's just the way it is.

NORWEGIAN CONSTITUTION DAY

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

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join in the

celebration of Syttende Mai, or Norwegian Constitution Day.

On May 17, 1814, an assembly of Norway's leaders signed a Constitution declaring Norway's independence and establishing a government that was radically democratic for its time, especially in Europe.

This Sunday, exactly 195 years later, millions of Norwegians will gather to celebrate their independence, their long history of constitutional democracy, and their national achievements.

Norwegians and Norwegian Americans across our country will celebrate at smaller, but no less joyful, Constitution Day events. In my home State of Washington, the Norwegian Ambassador to the U.S. will serve as the Grand Marshal of a Constitution Day parade.

The United States and Norway share in the celebration of Constitution Day because we have a strong diplomatic friendship, a robust trading relationship, and a shared history of commitment to democratic principles.

Moreover, the U.S. and Norway are military partners. Today in Afghanistan, as a for instance, Norwegian soldiers are fighting the Taliban and al Qaeda alongside U.S. servicemembers.

So I congratulate Norway on this Constitution Day and look forward to celebrating Syttende Mai with them for years to come.

STIMULUS

(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, the Associated Press issued an analysis this week that describes what many have known all along: The \$787 billion economic stimulus plan isn't getting to the people who need it most.

For those who knew the Federal Government would not be able to effectively and efficiently distribute the money, this comes as no surprise.

The May 11 story says: "Counties suffering the most from job losses stand to receive the least help from President Barack Obama's plan to spend billions of stimulus dollars on roads and bridges, an Associated Press analysis has found."

The story continues: "The very promise that Obama made, to spend money quickly and create jobs, is locking out many struggling communities needing those jobs. Many struggling communities don't have projects waiting on a shelf. They couldn't afford the millions of dollars for preparation and plans that often is required."

The Democrat spokesman for the House Transportation Committee said, "I think the Administration oversold the transportation aspect of this. It was sold as the heart and soul of the package, and it really just isn't."

That's the understatement of the year.

21ST CENTURY GREEN SCHOOLS

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, a healthy learning environment for our children is the gateway to a brighter future. Unfortunately, too many of them attend schools that are crumbling, making it harder for teachers to teach and students to learn. In fact, research has shown better quality schools have higher rates of student achievement.

For this reason I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 2187, the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act to modernize, upgrade, and repair school facilities across this country. This legislation creates healthier, safer, and more energy-efficient learning environments for our Nation's children. In addition to improving our schools, this bill will play an important role in protecting our environment and improving our economy through the creation of environmentally sound schools and the creation of thousands of new construction jobs.

Madam Speaker, I represent an urban district where many students would benefit from the modernization of these schools. By passing this bill, these students and others across this country will get the opportunity to learn in a healthier and sounder environment.

THE CAP-AND-TAX PROPOSAL: WRONG MEDICINE FOR AN AILING ECONOMY

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, a picture is worth a thousand words. And this ran in the Wall Street Journal: "The U.S. recovery: Uncle Sam throwing a lifeline out". And what is it? It is an anvil of a tax. This signifies what is happening on this cap-and-tax proposal.

A 44 percent to a 129 percent increase in electricity costs, gasoline up 61 cents, natural gas up 108 percent.

Don't believe me? Believe Chairman Emeritus JOHN DINGELL, who said, "Nobody in this country realizes that cap-and-trade is a tax, and it's a very big one."

Also, President Obama, who said, "Under my plan of a cap-and-trade system, electricity costs would necessarily skyrocket."

A tax increase is the wrong medicine for an ailing economy.

AMERICAN CLEAN ENERGY AND SECURITY ACT

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, as the American Clean Energy and