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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

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

Lord, we humble ourselves in Your presence. You are all powerful. We accept our limitations and turn to You in time of deepest need.

During this National Week of Prayer For Healing, we pray for the healing of AIDS in this Nation and across the globe. This devastating epidemic does not discriminate, and people of any gender, age, ethnicity, income, or sexual orientation can and are contracting this disease.

Help us, Lord, to improve the lives of those living with HIV-AIDS and enable us to spread resources, awareness, and hope to communities around the world to fight this aggressive virus.

In good times and bad, in sickness and health we find compassion in You, O Lord, and seek Your healing now and forever. 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 gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN 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. 1067. An act to support stabilization and lasting peace in northern Uganda and areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army through development of a regional strategy to support multilateral efforts to successfully protect civilians and eliminate the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army and to authorize funds for humanitarian relief and reconstruction, reconciliation, and transitional justice, and for other purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

CONGRATULATING UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

(Ms. GIFFORDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Arizona for its dedication to excellence and achievement in higher education. One hundred and twenty-five years ago tomorrow, the 13th Territorial Legislature of the Arizona Territory—we were a territory at that time—authorized the establishment of the University of Arizona. And since that date in 1885, the U of A has maintained a steadfast dedication to building a better Arizona and a better future. The U of A is a testament to the vision of land-grant universities established across the country. For over 100 years, they have led, being the most important drivers for research and innovation that has powered our Nation's economy.

The U of A today continues to be at the forefront of that research. Whether

it is mapping the corn genome, teaming with NASA, or using advanced optics to harvest and utilize the power of the sun, the U of A continues to press forward with cutting-edge technology. Most importantly, the university understands that its strength is in the diversity of its students.

I ask my colleagues to please join me in honoring and recognizing the 125th anniversary of the University of Arizona. Congratulations, President Shelton, to the students, the region, and to everyone associated with the U of A.

CONGRATULATING PHILLIS OETERS

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Phillis Oeters, chair of the 2009-2010 Orange Bowl Committee. Phillis has offered outstanding public service to Miami-Dade for the past 25 years. She has served on numerous community boards and has been active in several community arts organizations. She has also been recognized for her altruistic works many times, receiving awards and honors from the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, the American Red Cross, and United Way of Miami-Dade.

Phillis' strong professional background and her commitment to serving others made her the ideal candidate to chair the prestigious Orange Bowl Committee. She became the second woman in 100 years to chair a college bowl game.

Phillis, on behalf of all of south Florida and the United States Congress, congratulations on this achievement. Thank you for what you have done to make our community a much better place. Thank you, Phillis.

□ 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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TIGHTENING FISCAL BELT

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

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, during these tough economic times, American families have been forced to cut back and tighten their financial belts. It is time that Congress do the same and set an example for the rest of the Federal Government.

That is why I have introduced the Congressional Belt Tightening Act of 2010, which would cut our salaries as Members of Congress and our office budgets by 5 percent next year. Last year, my office tightened its financial belt and returned more than 8 percent of our official office budget to the Treasury for deficit reduction.

Additionally, we should pass legislation that requires votes on pay raises every year, no more automatic pay raises. My bill would require an up-or-down vote on all salary increases indefinitely. If Members think they are deserving of a pay raise, they will have to vote on it or answer to the American people.

Congress cannot seriously talk about reining in spending in Washington and working to decrease our Nation's debt if we are not willing to do it ourselves.

GEERT WILDERS IS PROSECUTED AND PERSECUTED FOR FREE SPEECH

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, freedom of speech continues to be shouted down by the politically correct police. In the Netherlands, it is against the law to say something that offends someone else's religion.

That is why Dutch lawmaker Geert Wilders is on trial for hurting people's feelings. He made a movie about terrorists and radical Islamic clerics encouraging violence in the name of hate. Now he is on trial for insulting Islam. He is charged with discrimination and incitement to hatred. Because Dutch law is intolerant of intolerance.

The Dutch courts say even truthful insult speech is a crime. Sounds like the law has become the enemy of free speech and a protector of radicals.

Geert Wilders boldly brings to the world's attention the dangers of religious radicals who believe in hateful violence, and he gets in trouble for it. He ought to be commended rather than condemned and charged with a crime. Freedom of speech is a universal human right, granted by God, especially if that speech is political, religious, or truthful. A free people won't tolerate intolerance for freedom for very long.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING WOMEN IN PENNSYLVANIA'S LEGISLATURE

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

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, March is Women's History Month, and this year will be the 90th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment. Yet after nine decades, the United States ranks only 74th out of 187 countries for the percentage of women in Federal legislature, with only 17 percent as Members of Congress that are female.

In my home State of Pennsylvania, only 14 percent of the general assembly are women. For Women's History Month, I would like to recognize the women of my district who serve in the Pennsylvania General Assembly: State Senators Jane Earll, Jane Clare Orie and Mary Jo White; and State Representatives Michele Brooks, Donna Oberlander, and Kathy Rapp.

I am proud so many women represent western Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. It is my hope that women in Pennsylvania and across this country will be inspired to seek office at the local, State, and Federal level.

START OVER ON HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, here are the results of a new Investor's Business Daily public opinion poll about health care, and if you look at the chart right here, you will see those results.

Asked if Congress should pass the current health care bill or start over, respondents said "start fresh" by a 2 to 1 ratio, by 61 percent to 32 percent, start over.

For Independents, the split was 65 percent to only 24 percent.

On using the budget reconciliation process to circumvent a Senate filibuster to help pass the bill, 51 percent were opposed and 35 percent in favor.

Independents disliked the idea by 57 percent to 29 percent, with 39 percent opposing it strongly.

By 41 percent to 27 percent, Americans were more likely to oppose than support lawmakers who voted for the current health care reform bill.

The American people are right: Congress should listen, start over, and do it right.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, Anthem Blue Cross in my district of California has requested raising premiums by 39 percent.

If we do nothing, the American people will continue to pay higher premiums and higher out-of-pocket costs

now and in the future. And the insurance companies will continue to control the high cost of health care. A step-by-step approach is not enough, and it is not the answer, especially for the 219,000 families in my district without coverage, and with a 14 percent unemployment rate.

Health care reform holds the insurance companies accountable, ends discrimination based on preexisting conditions, cuts and eventually closes the doughnut hole for thousands of seniors, including 5,200 in seniors in my district, expands coverage for 31 million Americans who do not have health care coverage, and cuts the national deficit by \$100 billion over the next 10 years.

Health care reform must make insurance more affordable, providing the largest middle class cut for health care in history, reducing the premium costs for tens of millions of families and small business owners who are priced out of coverage today. I ask us to support health care reform.

COMMENDING GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 100th anniversary of the Long Trail in Vermont, and to honor the Green Mountain Club for creating, maintaining, and preserving this national treasure.

Founded March 11, 1910, by James P. Taylor, the Green Mountain Club has been dedicated to, in Taylor's words, "making the Vermont mountains play a larger part in the life of the people."

In the past century, Taylor's dream has become a reality as seasoned hikers have taken to the trail, traversing the peaks and valleys of Vermont. From Massachusetts to Canada, they have hiked the spine of the Green Mountains, some for a day and some for the length of the 237-mile beautiful trail. And in the process, they have gained an appreciation for the glory of Vermont and the importance of stewardship and conservation.

I commend members of the Green Mountain Club, and I wish them another 100 years of success.

BROKEN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Jewish Hospital in my home town of Louisville, Kentucky, was forced to lay off 250 workers and announced plans to eliminate a total of 500 jobs. These hardworking people who played by the rules now, through no fault of their own, must figure out a new way to provide for their families.

Here are the reasons the CEO gave for the layoffs: "With 900,000 Kentuckians now without health insurance, we are experiencing a perfect storm of declining volumes and increasing levels of uncompensated care."