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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 15, 2010, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2010

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 12, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DONNA F. EDWARDS 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:

For the Members of Congress and all those scattered around the world who have been called to be Your ambassadors of reconciliation and peace, Lord, we pray this day.

Almighty Creator of the universe, receive them all in Your love and continue to call them out of darkness into light, out of ignorance to the knowledge of Your glorious name and bring hope to Your people.

Open human hearts to know You and You alone as the Most High, the Holy One, Whose dwelling is wrapped in mystery and beyond our imagining.

You alone flatten the arrogance of the proud, frustrate the designs of the godless, raise up the lowly and humble the self-righteous.

You are the benefactor of all the blessed and the Savior of all humanity.

Be a help to all in peril or in crisis. Be strength for the sick and the weak and consolation to those who mourn or who are afraid. Gift us and the whole world with peace 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 her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. PINGREE of Maine led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic 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 five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to come together and finally pass a health reform bill that provides Americans with the stability, affordability, and access to high quality choice in coverage they so richly deserve.

We must act now. We absolutely cannot afford to wait any longer.

Over the last year, we saw what happens when you give pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, and entrenched special interests time to spend millions of dollars on ad campaigns that spread misinformation, fear, and confusion.

In my home State of Maine, our largest insurer, Anthem, used this time to demand a 23 percent rate hike on individuals. And they weren't alone. Last year, profits for the five biggest insurance companies rose by 56 percent over the year before.

Enough is enough. Americans are counting on us. They sent us here to

□ 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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work hard and make difficult choices, entrusting us to represent them with integrity and to set aside partisanship and pettiness to do what is best for the American people. And I, for one, look forward to showing them that their trust was not misplaced.

HEALTH CARE COSTS IN A DISMAL ECONOMY

(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, this week it was announced that the unemployment rate in my home State reached a tragic new high of 12.6 percent. Statewide, 172,400 people have lost their jobs since the end of 2007.

In this crisis, the administration has irresponsibly announced that March 18 is their deadline to pass a job-killing health care takeover that imposes 100 new mandates on private individuals and businesses; includes billions of dollars in new taxes, and trillions in new government spending, squeezing Medicare; forces employers to cancel health care coverage, and forces people into a government-run health care plan.

More taxes, borrowing, and spending is not the way to reform health care in America. NFIB warns 1.6 million jobs will be killed. We should first consider job-creation policies, and then work on a step-by-step approach to lowering health care costs.

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

HEALTH CARE COSTS

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, Republicans have talked so much about the need for tort reform, you would think that lawyers single-handedly were responsible for America's skyrocketing health care costs. But a new report from Public Citizen found that the value of malpractice settlements is actually the lowest it has been since 1999, and that for 5 consecutive years the number of malpractice settlements has actually dropped.

And, of course, the health care costs have gone down; right? No, absolutely not.

Health care spending increased 83 percent between 2000 and 2009, while malpractice payments fell 8 percent during the same period.

Blaming our health care crisis on litigation costs is simply baloney. I hope my Republican friends can find another theme song for their attempt to derail what the American people want, and that is health care that is guaranteed and will not bankrupt America.

CONGRATULATING KANSAS JAYHAWKS

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

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Kansas men's basketball program and to congratulate them on a tremendous accomplishment. Yesterday, the Jayhawks defeated Texas Tech to pick up their 2,000th victory. The only other schools to reach this milestone are the University of Kentucky and North Carolina, and it should be noted that the basketball arenas at both of those schools are named after native Kansans and former Kansas basketball players. From James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, to the legendary Forrest "Phog" Allen, to current coach Bill Self, KU is a proven perennial power in college basketball.

This year, the Jayhawks will compete for their sixth national championship. In commemoration of this impressive accomplishment, I ask my congressional colleagues in the Congress to join me in a hearty, Rock Chalk Jayhawk, go KU.

JOBS—OUR TIME TO LEAD

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

Mr. HALL of New York. I rise today to talk about the Nation's unemployment problem. There are people in my district who are struggling. They want to work; they know how to work. Many of them are highly skilled and have great ideas, but they cannot find a job. It is our job, Madam Speaker, to help them.

In the 19th District of New York last Saturday, I sponsored two job fairs that helped hundreds of people connect with resources and people who can help them. Among them was 65-year-old George Myrnyj of Sparrow Bush. George retired last year from a career in manufacturing, but he still wants and needs to work. He has an idea for packaging do-it-yourself solar panel kits. Last Saturday, he was able to connect with people he thinks can help him.

Madam Speaker, I submit that it is our job to help George find a way to realize his dream and find a job or create one. This is not a time to do nothing. It is our time to lead.

OCS DELAY

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, offshore energy development is an important step toward reducing our dependence on foreign oil, creating new jobs, and putting our economy back on track.

In 2008, by ending the decades-long ban on offshore exploration, we opened

500 million acres containing an estimated 14 billion barrels of oil and 55 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration immediately instituted an extended public comment period, delaying progress.

Despite public support for increased offshore drilling, Secretary of the Interior Salazar recently stated the Obama administration will now wait until 2012 to put a new plan in place. This means the administration's initial 6-month delay has turned into a 3-year moratorium on new offshore exploration.

With the potential to create 1.2 million jobs and add \$8 trillion to our economy, it is irresponsible to continue to ignore the economic potential these areas hold.

HEALTH REFORM NOW

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, we need health care reform now, and failure to act is not an option. Doing nothing on health care reform doesn't mean that nothing happens. People will continue to lose coverage, to pay more in premiums, to be banned for preexisting conditions, to have caps on coverage, and other discriminatory practices.

By doing nothing for 8 years, the Republicans essentially endorsed these things. It isn't a choice, Madam Speaker, between the reform plan we have or nothing. The real option is how everything will continue to get worse.

INCURSION BY MEXICAN MILITARY HELICOPTER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, yesterday an armed Mexican military helicopter was spotted and photographed over a residential area a mile inside the territorial boundary of the United States.

Texas Sheriff Sigi Gonzalez of Zapata County said the Mexican Navy helicopter was not the first incursion by the Mexican military onto the U.S. side of the Rio Grande River.

There is a violent border war raging in this area between the Los Zetas and Gulf drug cartels for territory. Eight Mexican journalists have been kidnapped, numerous individuals killed in old west style shoot-outs, and the violence and corruption has even spilled over to the U.S. side. The cartels have even infiltrated U.S. law enforcement agencies on the border, resulting in 400 corruption cases being filed.

The border has become a corrupt, violent area, and now the Mexican military crosses our border with unknown intentions. The United States cannot allow the border to be a war zone for murder, mayhem, violence, drugs, and corruption.

And that's just the way it is.