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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,

January 20, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN T. SALAZAR 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:

Lord God, Creator of heaven and Earth, Eternal Shepherd of the living and the dead, as a Nation we unite with other nations of the world and pray for our suffering brothers and sisters in the poverty-stricken and Earth-shaken nation of Haiti. Have mercy on us all.

We beg You to help all the people of Haiti in all their needs. Come to the aid of the afflicted. Take pity on the helpless and the most vulnerable. Raise up the fallen as well as the ruins where human life and human remains may be still hidden. Restrain the wayward and sustain the brokenhearted. Bring compassion to those who mourn and eternal life to those who are buried in anonymity.

For, with the people of Haiti, we call upon You, Lord, as the everlasting Redeemer and Resurrection, both 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 his approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

WALL STREET REFORM

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Wall Street Bonus Tax Act. The legislation introduced by Congressman PETER WELCH would right a terrible wrong.

Right now, dozens of the financial institutions responsible for the economic meltdown are reverting right back to their old bad habits. They are getting ready to clap themselves on the back for the great job they think they've been doing by giving themselves billions of dollars in bonuses. But the thanks and the bonuses should go not to the bankers at Goldman Sachs and Citigroup and the others; it should go back to the American people.

It was the American people who stepped in and saved the banks from themselves. It was the American people who pumped billions of taxpayer dol-

lars into Wall Street to keep it from melting down and taking the rest of the economy with it. And it should be the American people who reap the benefits of that action, not Wall Street banks.

Congress should pass the Wall Street Bonus Tax Act and give the American people their money back.

SECOND SHOT HEARD AROUND THE WORLD

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on April 19, 1775, 235 years ago, shots rang out in Massachusetts that forever changed the history of the world. British redcoats were ordered to seize the weapons of the American militia, even though it's never a good idea to try to disarm the American people.

The famous midnight ride of Paul Revere warned the Minutemen that the invincible British were coming. And as the sun rose over the town of Lexington, Massachusetts, the first shots rang out against the British tyranny, shots heard around the world.

At the north bridge of Concord, patriots fought the British Army. The mighty British were defeated and turned back towards Boston. These were the first battles of the American Revolution to throw off the yoke of tyranny for a new idea of freedom.

The people of Massachusetts have fired a second shot heard around the world. Yesterday, they fired back against big, intrusive government, not with bullets, but with ballots. The Senate election was a statement for freedom over oppression. Our government, like the British, would do well never to underestimate the American people.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 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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HONORING STAFF SERGEANT DANIEL MERRIWEATHER

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a Memphis, Shelby County citizen who gave his life in service to our country in Afghanistan, Staff Sergeant Daniel Merriweather. He was the second soldier from Shelby County to die in Afghanistan since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom and our 12th in the Middle East since 2002. Staff Sergeant Merriweather, who was with the 118th Military Police Company, died when his convoy ran over an improvised explosive device.

He graduated from Overton High School in Memphis, Tennessee. He studied broadcast journalism, played football, loved sports, cowboy hats, boots, and country music. And you can see from his picture and from the reflections of his friends how much he loved life and how popular he was.

He wanted to serve his country, and he did so. He did two tours of duty, one in Afghanistan and one in Iraq. At 25 years of age, he is survived by his wife, Rachelle; his two children, 3-year-old Kale and Daniel Merriweather, Jr., just 3 months old; his parents, Pamela and Darryl Finnie; his sister, Adrienne; and his brother, Darryl Finnie, Jr.

These are the 12 soldiers who died from Shelby County, and unfortunately Staff Sergeant Merriweather joins that company.

Mr. Speaker, let us take a moment to honor the service and memory of Staff Sergeant Merriweather.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Sergeant Merriweather.

PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION ONE YEAR AGO

(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. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago today, the President was sworn into office, giving Democrats full control of Congress and the White House. After promising the American people a misnamed stimulus plan to keep unemployment under 8 percent, we see 10 percent unemployment continuing to cripple families.

Three hundred and sixty-five days later, the American people still haven't seen this Congress focus on job creation policies to promote small businesses. Instead, the American people have been saddled with more borrowing, more taxes, more spending, and increased deficits. As shown in Massachusetts, the American people support limited government, not failed big government.

Seven million Americans have lost jobs since Democrats took Congress, and now Americans want real change. It's time the Democrats get this mes-

sage and get their priorities straight: Drop this backroom government health care takeover and take up job creation policies.

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

MAIN STREET NEEDS HELP

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

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, last fall, at the end of the last administration, we all know that America's largest financial institutions and companies were on the brink of collapse, and the Federal Government, and more importantly, the American taxpayers came to their rescue. But let's be clear: We did not do that because we were fans of their behavior. We did not appreciate even then the excessive greed that was driving Wall Street without any sense of responsibility. We helped them because ordinary citizens were being crushed, and we hoped to get the credit flowing.

So what has happened? Wall Street has experienced recovery, but Main Street still needs help. Wall Street needs to help pay for the revitalization of Main Street, and that is why I support the Wall Street Bonus Tax, which is going to levy a tax on those excessive bonuses that the Wall Street banks have the audacity to continue to give out even as the plight of our middle class is suffering.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do everything we can to stand up for the American taxpayers and the people who live in our communities.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM SPECIAL ELECTION IN MASSACHUSETTS

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the United States Senate special election in Massachusetts offers many lessons for both Democrats and Republicans. Surely among them are these:

All true reform starts with the voice of the people.

Moderation beats extremism.

Common sense triumphs partisanship.

Voters can exercise real independence.

One-party control leads to arrogance.

There are few guaranteed election results.

Listen to the people, don't defy them.

Of course some will say there are no lessons to be learned or that the result of this special election should be ignored or can be explained away. But those who don't listen to the people, Democrats or Republicans, will pay a steep political price.

AMERICANS WANT REAL CHANGE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. It's clear from the results last evening that the voters are angry. They haven't seen the change in direction that they thought they voted for 1 year ago in November.

Now, some Republicans will see it as an endorsement to turn back to the failed policies of the Bush years that put us in this mess. That wasn't the message. But the message is they want real change. They want the reform of Wall Street. They're tired of business as usual where the fat cats make out and the taxpayers get the bill. They want to see real reform in health care, take on the insurance industry, take on the pharmaceutical industry.

The Obama administration kicked off health care reform with a deal with the pharmaceutical industry. Now, that is not the kind of reform the American people want to see.

We need to step back and put forward a package of real reform. Take away the antitrust exemption of the health insurance industry; lower the cost of health care for all Americans; make the policies better; take on the pharmaceutical industry; allow people to reimport drugs from Canada that are exactly the same as the drugs sold here at a fraction of the cost. Those are the kinds of concrete steps people want to see.

HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION CONTAINS A MARRIAGE PENALTY

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, while there is controversy about the pending health care legislation, one point where there should be bipartisan agreement is that the Federal Government should not penalize people simply for being married.

After review, it appears that both the House and the Senate bills contain significant marriage penalties. In the House bill, an unmarried couple with an income of \$25,000 each would have their combined premiums capped at \$3,076 per year. If the couple gets married, their annual premium cap drops to \$5,160 for the same insurance. In short, there is a \$2,084 penalty for simply being married.

While under the Senate bill it would be less, the marriage penalty would still exceed \$1,500 a year. Simply put, a marriage penalty on the middle class is just one more reason to dump this government takeover of our health care system.

A NEW ECONOMIC VISION

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