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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. WILSON of Ohio).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 6, 2010.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES A. WILSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Pastor Tim Alexander, Smith Springs Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, offered the following prayer:

O, God, hear the weary prayers of my beloved Nashville. The floods have moved houses off their foundations. O, God, be the foundation of our hope to rebuild; comfort and sustain us. As the waters recede, let our energies rise as we work together.

O, God, from this place, a young man, Bradley, 21 just yesterday, from our church, was sent to war. Today, in his country's service, Bradley moves in harm's way. Give him courage. Grant his leaders wisdom. Bring him home safe and whole. O, God, bless his parents, Angie and David. Bless his grandparents, Gerald and Lynne and Bettye. Grant them a measure of peace even as he is in danger.

As words have weight, even much more do the names of our sons and daughters have precious worth. Many sons and daughters who bear our names have been sent from this place. You know their names, O, God, and ours. Grant all who command them to be aware of them and of their families and of their names. Grant that leadership is ever tender to people with names.

This I pray in the name of Your Son, Jesus.
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 gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPs) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. CAPPs 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 without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5148. An act to amend title 39, United States Code, to clarify the instances in which the term "census" may appear on mailable matter.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3111. An act to establish the Commission on Freedom of Information Act Processing Delays.

WELCOMING PASTOR TIM ALEXANDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, we are honored to have here today Minister Tim Alexander from Nashville, Tennessee, to offer a prayer for Nashville and for this House.

Minister Alexander is a remarkable man. He and his wife, Polly, have been married for 26 years. They have two wonderful children: Abby and Ethan. Mr. Alexander has administered the flock at Smith Springs Church of Christ now since 1999 and has been a preacher of the gospel since 1984. He does much good work outside the church for victims of child sexual abuse and for victims of crime in general, so we are deeply honored to have Tim Alexander with us today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas). The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

FINANCIAL REFORM

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, the old joke around Congress is that the Senate is Washington's legislative hospice: a place where good bills and ideas go to die a slow and quiet death.

I had really hoped that, given the necessity for financial reform today, this joke would have been proven wrong. Unfortunately, many of the reforms passed in the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2009, including strong consumer protections and much-needed reforms to the industry, are being watered down.

The latest victim of this appeasement and the most egregious example of the Senate's appeasement strategy

□ 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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for Wall Street lobbyists is here, which is the removal this week of the dissolution fund. I made sure that this dissolution fund was included in the House bill. It was intended to act much like your car insurance by discouraging risky behavior.

Let's say that a bank like Goldman Sachs drove a new Ferrari down the road with little regard for traffic or public safety. It would then be assessed more in fees to the fund than a bank that drives safely and observes all the posted signals.

Think again. Under the new plan in the Senate, Goldman can drive its Ferrari any way it wants, and when it crashes, the American public will have to pay.

59TH CELEBRATION OF OUR NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

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

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, today is the 59th celebration of the National Day of Prayer.

Like most Americans, I believe that the effective and fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and what is true of individuals is also true of nations.

The truth is that America has always been a Nation of prayer. Pilgrims relied on prayer during their first and darkest winter. Our Founding Fathers prayed during the Continental Congress in 1776. President Lincoln offered his famous proclamation for humility, fasting, and prayer at the height of the Civil War, and President Truman named the National Day of Prayer in 1952.

Sadly, voluntary prayer has been under attack of late. It has been driven from our public schools and from our graduation ceremonies by activist courts. Just last month, a Federal court declared this National Day of Prayer to be unconstitutional. That ruling ignored our history, our traditions, and it should be overturned.

During these days of challenge for American families at home and abroad, on this National Day of Prayer, let it be said now more than ever: we are a Nation of prayer.

SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS AND THE ARC LEGISLATION

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, this week, I introduced the Appalachian Veterans Outreach Improvement Act to improve access to services and benefits for veterans in Appalachia. My legislation would authorize a cooperative agreement between the Secretary of the VA and the Appalachian Regional Commission, or ARC.

In rural districts like mine, veterans often lack the access and resources

necessary to receive the benefits and services that they have earned. Veterans in Appalachia encounter difficult obstacles, like having to travel great distances to get service. This legislation would highlight ARC's unique understanding of the Appalachian region, and it would allow the VA to work with the ARC to provide technical assistance to our veterans.

I urge my colleagues to join me in standing up for this rural veterans act.

NICOLE—KIDNAPPED

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, Brazil has become a haven for stolen children from the United States. There are over 50 kidnapped children in Brazil.

Fox News 26 in Houston, Texas, first brought attention to the story of one little girl who was stolen from her father—my friend and constituent, Marty Pate. Marty lives in Crosby, Texas, and he has not seen his daughter, Nicole, in 4 years. Her mother, Monica, is a native of Brazil. She took Nicole on a trip there in 2006, and she never came back.

Legal documents from Texas give Marty joint custody, and international law requires Brazil to return Nicole to America. Marty wants to see his daughter and have her visit her family in the United States, but officials in Brazil are still stonewalling and are ignoring their legal duty.

Our State Department must pressure Brazil to follow its international treaty obligations, and Brazil must stop sanctioning the kidnapping of American children.

Marty has the right to be reunited with his kidnapped daughter, Nicole.

And that's just the way it is.

GULF OF MEXICO OIL SPILL

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, it is painfully clear that BP's gulf oil spill could dwarf any environmental disaster in our Nation's history.

This tragedy has claimed 11 lives. It has contaminated the water with millions of gallons of oil, and it is impacting the livelihoods of all who make their living from the gulf's resources. But this disaster will be all the more tragic if we fail to learn from it.

The first steps, of course, are to stop the leaks, to contain the spill, and to attend to the devastating consequences of the explosion and of its aftermath. The Obama administration swiftly responded to the BP disaster from day one. It mobilized the government's resources to minimize the harm on the health, economy, and the environment of the coast. Now it is time to ensure the complete scrutiny of this horrible environmental disaster.

Today, I am introducing legislation to establish an independent commission to examine the causes of the BP disaster and to make recommendations to prevent future tragedies. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort to make sure a disaster like this never happens again.

SUDAN

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

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, Sudan—genocide—killing. Many of the household names once engaged on Sudan have moved on to the next cause while the refrain “never again” echoes faintly, but the desperation in Darfur's camps is still a reality.

The CPA which ended Khartoum's brutal 20-year civil war with the south where 2.1 million perished—and where mainly Christians died—hangs in the balance. Against this backdrop, the administration's policy is languishing.

There is an immediate need for renewed, principled leadership on Sudan at the highest levels—leadership which is clear-eyed about the history of the internationally indicted war criminal at the helm in Khartoum. These are the people who gave safe haven to Osama bin Laden from 1991 to 1996.

President Obama must empower Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rice to take control of this faltering policy. Time is running out. Lives hang in the balance. A stalemate policy in Sudan is not an option. President Obama must act.

TAX EXTENDERS/RAIL

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

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, improving our rail infrastructure isn't just about getting people and goods from here to there faster and more efficiently. It is the heart of regional economic development, connecting communities, businesses, consumers, and producers to foster the kind of economic growth and job creation we as a Nation need.

Our short line railroads are at the center of this, but because the Tax Extenders Act of 2009 has not been enacted into law, they have been unable to plan vital maintenance work this construction season. The section 45G short line railroad tax credit included in this bill generates 6.9 million work hours of rail maintenance-of-way each year—the equivalent of more than 3,300 full-time jobs nationwide, not to mention the tens of thousands of jobs in America's steel and timber industries that make railroad ties and steel rail.

Our short line railroads are too important to our economic recovery to neglect them any longer. It is time for both the House and the Senate to come