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House of Representatives

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

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Carl White, Highland Baptist Church, Meridian, Mississippi, offered the following prayer:

Dear Lord our God, in these turbulent times when rhetoric is hot and passions aflame, be with us.

Help the Members of this body to draw the lessons gained from the struggles of our history, that by respecting one another, we show the ultimate respect for You, our Creator.

Help us to remember that it is never wrong to stand for freedom and that it is always best when we listen more than we speak.

Show us anew the awesome power that is unleashed from the heart of love, and teach us yet again that most simple but profound lesson of life: that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Guide this House as they debate, vote, and interact with one another and their constituents. May we as a people conduct ourselves in such a way that we demonstrate our gratitude for Your continual blessings.

In Your name we pray. 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 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. CARL WHITE

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. HARPER. Madam Speaker, I am honored today to introduce the House of Representatives' guest chaplain of the day, Dr. Carl White. He is the pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Meridian, Mississippi, and I can say that I would not be here today if it were not for my dear friend Carl White.

I met Carl in 1971 when we were 15-year-olds in the 10th grade in high school. We became great friends, and he invited me to join him for the Campus Life, Youth For Christ, meetings that were held at the high school. The last meeting of that year was when I made a profession of faith in Christ.

Then Carl invited me to join him at church, and it was there that I met my future wife. Sidney was 15 and I was 17 on our first date, and our first date was with Carl White and his future wife, Frances. Those are special memories. We have been at each other's weddings, and we have been dear friends now for almost 40 years.

Madam Speaker, I want to say what a profound impact that Carl White has had in my life and how we thank him for his service as pastor of the folks in his church. May God bless him.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

RENEWABLE BIOMASS AND EPA

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

Mr. SCHRADER. Madam Speaker, America has tremendous potential for renewable energy production. Indeed, these are the jobs of our future.

One of the most important renewable energy sources for Oregon that binds rural and urban communities is the production of energy from forestry and agricultural byproducts, otherwise known as renewable biomass.

Unfortunately, it would appear that EPA is rewriting the rules in direct contravention to the intent of this Congress. In their final tailoring rule for regulating greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act, the EPA ignores hundreds of studies and precedents from their own research that biomass combustion is indeed carbon neutral. This contradicts what was also included in the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which passed out of this very body.

Despite the tremendous benefit to engage our rural farmers and foresters to play a role in our renewable energy future, EPA has decided to legislate instead of administrate. Through this tailoring role, they are doing their best to alienate rural America and deny them the opportunity to be a part of our renewable future.

SOMALI ILLEGALS CROSS INTO TEXAS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Homeland Security has issued a terrorist alert for Texas. An Islamic terrorist group from Somalia, al Shabaab, is infiltrating across our southern border.

A people-smuggling ring has been exposed through South America and hundreds of Somali illegals were given

□ 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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fake identification. Many of them have ties to Islamic terrorist groups.

This is al Shabaab's Somali terrorist organization, and it's aligned with al Qaeda. Their priority is to impose Sharia Islamic law, and they have stated their intent to harm America.

In addition to the Somalis and the terrorists from Somalia coming across the border, law enforcement officials in Texas said Mexican smugglers are coaching Middle Eastern illegals. They're teaching them how to dress and look Hispanic, and they are learning how to speak Spanish.

Mr. Speaker, what is it going to take for the administration to really secure the border? The warning signs could not be clearer. We need to send sufficient National Guard groups to the border now. Until the Federal Government understands border security is a national security issue, we are going to continue to have these threats.

And that's just the way it is.

GETTING OUR ECONOMY BACK ON TRACK AND CREATING NEW JOBS

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

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, getting our economy back on track and creating new jobs is the priority of my constituents and a top priority of my own.

The Democratic Congress has already taken significant steps to create jobs and jump-start the economy, resulting in the lowest tax rates in over 50 years and the creation of over 500,000 new jobs so far this year. The American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act continues these efforts.

Current tax law allows companies here in the United States to be rewarded for shipping American jobs overseas. This is unconscionable, and American workers deserve better. This legislation includes provisions that close these tax loopholes and protects jobs here at home. This legislation will also continue to provide hard-working American families with the relief they deserve, relief on property taxes, sales taxes, and college tuition.

Mr. Speaker, the American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act is another important step to creating new jobs and jump-starting our economy.

□ 1015

ROHINGYA: BURMA'S FORGOTTEN MINORITY

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the ongoing abuses and tragedies in Burma are almost unfathomable. The brutal and cruel military dictators systematically oppress and exploit the ethnic minorities in Burma, and they are denied the basic and fundamental rights that belong to every human being.

Among the minorities most deprived of such rights is the Rohingya, a Muslim minority in western Burma. The Rohingya people are denied citizenship, freedom of movement, college education, and even marriage. They need permission just to leave their villages and are prohibited from traveling beyond a particular region of the country. The tactics of rape, forced labor, torture, land seizures, arbitrary arrests, and extortion are also used to repress them. As a result, 1.5 million Rohingya have fled to surrounding countries.

I met with a representative of the Rohingya recently; and his request was, Please speak up for us, we are people too. For the Rohingya and for all the ethnic minorities and suffering people of Burma who are victims of this cruel dictatorship, we must speak out against their horrific abuses. Our government, the U.N., and ASEAN should speak up as well.

REMEMBERING OUR TROOPS ON MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, as we prepare to commemorate Memorial Day, it's appropriate for us to look back at a few ways this Congress, in just the past year and a half, has worked to ensure that this Nation keeps its promise to our Nation's military veterans.

We expanded the new GI Bill college benefits to the children of all troops fallen since September 11, 2001. We passed landmark legislation for wounded veterans by providing help for family members and other caregivers and eliminating copayments for severely wounded veterans. Since 2007, we've increased funding for veterans health care by 60 percent, including the largest single-year increase in the 80-year history of the VA.

While we have accomplished a great deal to repay the men and women in uniform for their service, we still have more to do. Let us use the occasion of this Memorial Day weekend to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice and recommit ourselves to continuing to fight for the troops that have fought for us.

POLITICAL GAMES HAVE NO BUSINESS IN MILITARY BILLS

(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, benefits for our military men and women, as explained in the Army Times, should not be used as props in political games. The process of the final version of the "tax extenders" bill is Washington shenanigans at its worst. Combining tax increases and unrelated spending with legitimate needs

for our military men and women is insulting. I am confident the American people will see straight through these games.

I am a long-time supporter of concurrent receipt and finally ending the disability tax on retirees eligible for military and veterans benefits. There are over 153 lawmakers who are supportive of eliminating this inequity, and yet the political trap has been added with this tax increase, causing a "no" vote.

As the ranking member on the Military Personnel Subcommittee, I know that our military personnel deserve more from their lawmakers than these political games.

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

SUPPORT THE DURBIN AMENDMENT

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, small businesses and consumers scored a major victory, finally, against abusive credit card practices by big banks and Visa MasterCard. By a strong bipartisan vote of 64-33, the Senate passed an amendment to the Wall Street reform legislation, cracking down on those out-of-control credit and debit card swipe fees.

Known as the Durbin amendment, this practical, commonsense language prevents card issuers from endlessly increasing costs borne by small businesses, costs that for many stores add up to more than the cost of health care. It also restricts some of the industry's most anticompetitive practices, finally allowing stores to give you a cash discount.

I urge my colleagues in the House to stand up for small businesses, provide them the protection they deserve, and support inclusion of the Durbin amendment in the final package of Wall Street reform.

OIL SPILL SITUATION STINKS

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, as we've had hearings regarding the oil spill out in the gulf, there have been some staggering things come forward, and the media is not grabbing it like they should and letting everyone know.

Who knew that the inspectors inspecting the offshore rigs were unionized? So they had union limits on how many hours and travel and this kind of thing. These guys are like the military. They're out there to protect the environment, and we're going to put limits on them? They've got to be out there protecting us.

And then yesterday, Director Birnbaum, when asked what kind of checks and balances did you have, she