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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 our God, in You there is no beginning, no end. You truly are dynamic presence, ever self-revealing, guiding all things and human events.

Show Your presence in the midst of our empowering activities and empty frustrations.

May the priorities and the work of this Congress reveal Your goodness to the Nation and make all aware of Divine Providence behind every problem and obstacle as well as every delightful gift.

For You are our life and our salvation, 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 North Carolina (Ms. Foxx) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. FOXX 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

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

CHARTING A NEW COURSE FOR OUR NATION

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

Mr. KUCINICH. What if the BP gusher in the gulf is unstoppable? This is a challenging question which is making its way through various blogs. What if millions of barrels of oil continue to flow uncontrolled from the hole in the seabed? We should be preparing now for a worst-case scenario. We should be mobilizing our Nation now, developing new, comprehensive plans for sustainable, alternative energy, for environmental protection, for public health, for preservation of species, for security, for rebuilding our economy and repairing commerce. We should be challenging our fellow citizens and ourselves to take part in charting a new course for our Nation, towards creating an America which has unlimited energy because it has unlimited vision, unclouded by greed or partisan advantage.

DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION

(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, the American people are tired of Washington politicians turning a deaf ear to their wishes and concerns. Two days ago, Congressman DAVE CAMP put forward a proposal to repeal the provisions in the government health care takeover that mandates Americans buy government-run insurance. But this popular proposal was defeated by Washington liberals by a vote of 187-230.

People in my home State of South Carolina do not want an out-of-touch Washington bureaucrat forcing them to buy government-run insurance. We support the lawsuit of Attorney Gen-

eral Henry McMaster. We must defend the Constitution. Washington bureaucrats do not know what is best for South Carolinians or their families. The government mandate is unconstitutional.

We need a constitutional alternative, and I have a solution: Siding With American Patients Act, SWAP Act, to repeal the government takeover and replace it with a patient-centered and affordable solution that expands access and continues to cover preexisting conditions.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

IRAN SANCTIONS LEGISLATION

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today once again to urge passage of a final bill to impose tough sanctions on Iran. A final bill is long overdue. The House passed the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act last year, and the Senate passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act in January.

Iran is not stopping its ruthless quest for nuclear weapons while Congress continues to deliberate. We simply cannot allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons. We must act quickly and boldly to prevent that from happening. A nuclear Iran would not only pose a dire threat to Israel, a vitally important ally in the region, but to the United States as well.

We need to act, and we need to act now. I hope the conferees will complete their work quickly so that a final Iran sanctions bill can be enacted soon.

WE NEED A BUDGET

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

□ 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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Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, over the past weekend, President Obama sent a letter to Congress. He said we need to spend \$50 billion “as quickly as possible” in order to “jump-start private sector job creation.”

I’m not sure if the President has read the unemployment reports lately, but 16 months since his trillion dollar stimulus bill became law, the private sector is still struggling under the tax and regulatory burden of an ever expanding Federal Government. Unemployment is at 9.7 percent, and frankly, the last thing the private sector needs is the fear of higher taxes to pay for more wasteful government spending.

What this country needs as “quickly as possible” is for House Democrats to put forth an annual budget and for Congress and the President to have the courage to make real spending cuts. We can’t keep spending billions of dollars and calling it “emergency” spending so that it doesn’t have to be paid for, because eventually it will have to be paid for, and the American taxpayers know that day of reckoning is coming.

It is time for Democrats in this Chamber to stop talking about fiscal discipline and actually do something about it. As your majority whip said over the weekend, this economy is your baby. So take responsibility, put a budget on the table, and let’s debate it and give the American people a chance to hear which party is listening to them.

GIVING SMALL BUSINESS THE RESOURCES THEY NEED

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the engines of our economy, and their success is critical to our economic recovery and long-term economic growth. Sixty percent of new jobs are created by small businesses, and over half of this country’s economic growth since World War II has been from innovation and new technologies. We can and should empower the businesses and entrepreneurs who make our economy go by creating favorable conditions for businesses to start, to expand, and to put people back to work. That’s why I urge my colleagues to support the Small Business Jobs and Credit Act designed to increase small business lending, help small businesses hire new workers and expand their operations. When I talk to small business owners back home in Missouri, the number one issue they identify as an obstacle to hiring people is access to credit. We must continue to focus on promoting our small businesses to grow this economy and to get people back to work.

OIL SPILL NOT AN EXCUSE TO KILL JOBS

(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 horrific environmental and economic damage in the gulf continues, but it seems like the administration wants to move on to other things before the leak is stopped and the oil cleaned up. The President spent a significant part of his speech Tuesday night talking about imposing new costs on energy and cap-and-trade climate legislation.

We all know how important it is to have less dependence on fossil fuels, especially from foreign sources, and encourage clean energy production. The question is whether we do that by imposing new costs on the American people because of global warming. We should not impose new taxes on energy just based on the hope that clean energy will become more cost feasible.

I don’t have to remind anyone that we have unemployment near 10 percent. Making it more expensive to run factories and small businesses will not bring back jobs.

We certainly need clean energy, and I’ve been proud to see sensible solar, geothermal, and hydroelectric projects move forward in my district. What we don’t need are job-killing taxes on what BP chairman calls the “small people” that will make it even more difficult to recover jobs not only along the gulf coast but across our Nation.

FIDEL CASTRO’S ANTI-SEMITIC STATEMENT REGARDING ISRAEL

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my outrage at Fidel Castro’s recent anti-Israel comments. In response to Israel’s interception of the flotilla in May, Fidel Castro published a statement in which he absurdly asserts that Israelis would like to send Palestinians to be cremated, as the Nazis did to the Jews.

Castro’s comments are outrageous and cruel. He ignorantly disregards the horror of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Jewish community. To suggest that Israel will consider a Nazi-inspired genocide of the Palestinians is inexcusably malicious.

This propaganda was not only published by the Cuban regime but then widely distributed. His offensive comments clearly portray the prejudice and anti-Semitic position of the Cuban regime. Castro’s words cannot shame or erase the democratic tradition in Israel and the strong relationship Israel shares with the United States.

I ask my colleagues to continue to work with Israel towards a peaceful solution for the Israeli and Palestinian people. And I encourage my colleagues to view Castro’s comments for what they are, the dangerous scheme of a brutal dictator, designed to hurt the people of Israel and obstruct the peace process.

□ 1015

HONORING THE SERVICE OF HARRISON FIRE CHIEF JOHN NEAL

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Harrison Fire Chief, John Neal, who has devoted his life to the citizens of Harrison, Arkansas, and is now retiring from duty after 21 years of service.

During his time as chief, John has exhibited his ability to lay the groundwork to ensure the people of Harrison’s safety by instituting more pre-fire planning, better building inspections and construction plan reviews, along with assisting in better public education of fire safety. He went above and beyond and worked with all of the fire departments in Boone County, making the county a much safer place to live.

Chief Neal is an outstanding leader. John has been married to Mary Lu for 30 years, has five children, and he looks forward to spending more time with his grandchildren.

I wish him continued success in his future activities. And today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Chief John Neal, who will be missed, but I’m confident will continue his dedication to his community and his State.

LEGISLATION TO BENEFIT SENIORS

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

Ms. GIFFORDS. Mr. Speaker, in these difficult economic times, the face of retirement is changing. Today, seniors are staying on the job longer—not just because they want to, but, frankly, because they have to. That’s why I’m introducing two bills that will begin to address some of the challenges that we see facing our older workforce.

The Older Americans’ Job Opportunities Blueprint Act expands the work opportunity tax credit already available to over a dozen specific parts of our employment pool that will now benefit employers in hiring older Americans. For the first time in our history almost 20 percent of our workforce is 55 years and older; this is very different than we’ve had in the past.

I have also introduced the Back to School Act, which will give seniors financial assistance to take courses if they want to change their careers or to make them more competitive in the workforce.

Congress, of course, focuses a lot of our attention on new entrants or future entrants into the U.S. workforce, but the reality is that seniors are putting off retirement until much longer, and it’s time that we change the way our Nation thinks about retirement. I am excited to introduce these two pieces of legislation that will give