

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania 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 a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1886. An act to prevent trafficking in counterfeit drugs.

The message also announced, that pursuant to the provisions of S. Con. Res. 35 (One Hundred Twelfth Congress), the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER); and

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

PORTS CAUCUS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week, Congresswoman JANICE HAHN (CA) and I hosted the inaugural event for the bipartisan congressional PORTS Caucus.

The PORTS Caucus currently includes a bipartisan group of 42 Members of Congress, representing 19 States and two territories.

I represent several ports in southeast Texas, and I am pleased that our Nation's ports now have a voice in Congress. Ms. HAHN represents ports on the west coast.

Ports are critical to our national security and our economic security. They are America's link to the rest of the world, whether it's the food we eat, the car we drive, the light bulb we use in our homes, or the clothes we wear. Every American household is impacted by some activity at our ports.

The PORTS Caucus will raise awareness and educate others about the major issues important to American ports.

I look forward to working with Congresswoman HAHN, and I want to thank her for thinking of this idea; I look forward to working with other Members of Congress to ensure economic growth in America.

And that's just the way it is.

GIRL SCOUTS OF RHODE ISLAND

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, a program that strives to help young girls become model citizens.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts of America, as well as National Women's History Month, I'm pleased to recognize the contributions that the Girl Scouts have made in Rhode Island where it has reached 9,400 girls through its 770 troops in the past year.

More than just going door to door selling Thin Mints and Tagalongs to their friends and neighbors, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island provide young women and girls across our State with the opportunity to take part in a group that builds girls of honor, confidence, courage, and character who make the world a better place and giving them a foundation for success later in life.

The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island should take great pride in the work they do every day.

I congratulate the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island on their incredible work.

CBO PROJECTS HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT UNTIL 2014

(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, last month the Congressional Budget Office released a report which stated that our Nation's unemployment rate is not expected to dip below 8 percent until 2014, which reveals the President's policies have failed and destroyed jobs. America is experiencing the longest stretch of high unemployment since the Great Depression. The study also concluded that if every American searching for employment were counted, sadly our unemployment rate would be around 15 percent.

When the President lobbied for his economic plan, he promised that our unemployment rate would not exceed 8 percent. Instead, February marks the 36th month where the unemployment rate has been above 8 percent. This is a tragedy for American families.

House Republicans are focused on putting American families back to work. I urge the President and the liberal-controlled Senate to take immediate action of the dozens of job-creation bills that have passed the House with bipartisan support.

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

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, March 2, 2012, marked Texas Independence Day.

It was 176 years ago that the Texas Declaration of Independence was ratified by the convention of 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos, Texas.

A military dictatorship took over Mexico, abolishing the Mexican Constitution. The dictatorship refused to provide trial by jury, freedom of religion, public education for its citizens, and allowed the confiscation of firearms. The last one being the most intolerable, particularly among Texans.

Failure to provide these basic rights violated the sacred contract between a government and its people. Texas did what we still do today, stood up for our rights. In response, the Mexican Army marched to Texas, waging a war on the land and the people, enforcing the decrees of the military dictatorship through brute force and without any democratic legitimacy.

As future Texas President and Governor Sam Houston, along with other delegates, signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, General Santa Anna's army besieged the independence forces at the Alamo in San Antonio.

Yesterday, March 6, 176 years ago, 4 days after the signing, the Alamo fell with Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis, former Tennessee Congressman David Crockett, and approximately 200 other Texas defenders.

In a dramatic turnaround, Texans achieved their independence several weeks later on April 21, 1836. Roughly 900 members of the Texas Army overpowered a larger Mexican force. I'm proud to represent the San Jacinto Battlefield and State Park.

God bless Texas and God bless America.

THE JOBS ACT

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today we're considering a bipartisan legislative package called the JOBS Act, Jumpstart Our Business Startups. This is what our constituents want us to do, and they want to see us get it done.

The JOBS Act is a legislative package designed to move our economy and restore opportunities for America's primary job creators, our small businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurs. These measures create capital formation, will spur the growth of start-ups and small businesses, and pave the way for more small-scale businesses to go public and create more jobs.

As I said, this has broad bipartisan support. Of the six bills, only 32 Members voted "no" on all six of these bills as they moved through the House and the committee.

In his State of the Union, the President asked us to send him a bill that

helps small businesses and entrepreneurs, and that's exactly what the JOBS Act does. We're presented with an opportunity to act in a truly bipartisan fashion that will promote job growth across our Nation. So we should join together, I believe, as Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate, to give the President the piece of legislation so he can sign it into law.

CASSIUS S. WILLIAMS

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Today, I rise to congratulate Cassius S. Williams, a dear friend, who is the recipient of North Carolina State University's Watauga Medal Award.

Each year, NC State honors alumni for outstanding contributions to the university by bestowing on them the Watauga Medal Award.

Recipients of this historic award understand the enormous value of education, and their commitment to that idea has generated immeasurable prosperity for communities across America.

Watauga Medal Award recipients are candles in the dark, men and women of great purpose who have injected their talents into the lifeblood of North Carolina State University.

Mr. Speaker, this week Cassius S. Williams of Greenville, North Carolina, joined the ranks of great servants as its newest honoree. Without a doubt, his work will continue to foster a better education for our children that will create a brighter future for North Carolina.

The House of Representatives appreciates Cassius Williams.

□ 1210

MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO STAND BY ISRAEL

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the opportunity to meet with many of my constituents who were here to advocate for continued support for Israel. I had the opportunity to listen to Prime Minister Netanyahu's remarks on the importance of the American-Israeli alliance and friendship. I'm here to tell them today that I could not agree more, and that at no time has the bond between our countries been more important.

In an increasingly uncertain and unstable region in the world, Israel has proven time and again to be a steadfast friend. In a region governed at best by fledgling democracies with uncertain futures and at worst by brutal authoritarian dictatorships, Israel is a champion of democracy and freedom.

But today Israel is surrounded by increasingly unstable neighbors. Just over the horizon, they're faced with an

Iranian regime that threatens them with annihilation.

In these circumstances, we must do what is right and stand with our friends and allies, the Israeli people. I've been proud to do so in this Chamber, and I will continue to do so in the weeks and months ahead.

CREATE JOBS

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, 56 percent of Americans think that creating new jobs should be Congress' number 1 priority, but since taking control of the House, the Republicans have yet to pass one single jobs bill.

Republicans have been more interested in obstructing than finding solutions. They said "no" to the American Jobs Act. Then they introduced a transportation bill that would cut 550,000 jobs. Now with gas prices on the rise, they refuse to roll up their sleeves and get to work.

We should be voting today on legislation to cut billions in tax breaks for big oil companies, crack down on speculators who are inflating prices at the pump, and invest in new sources such as solar energy and new energy. But instead, we have more of the same partisan gridlock from the Party of No.

Our constituents deserve more. America deserves more. Let's get to work now. Lower the gas prices and create jobs.

HIGH ENERGY PRICES

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to call attention to the millions of families and small business owners across America who are feeling the impact of high energy prices.

According to AAA, the national average of a gallon of gasoline currently stands at \$3.77, with no sign of relief in the near future. Couple this with higher utility rates, and Americans are struggling under the weight of ever-increasing energy costs. Yet Washington continues to attempt to pile more regulations and higher taxes on energy producers in this country.

Let's be clear: higher energy taxes, more utility mandates, and bigger regulatory burdens drive up the cost of energy production. Washington will not lower energy costs for Americans by placing further roadblocks in the way of energy production in this country.

As workers sit idly waiting to construct the Keystone pipeline and utility and energy producers work to remove government burdens and barriers, the American people are losing. It's time we get the Federal Government out of the way and work together towards bipartisan solutions that get America producing domestic sources of energy in all forms.

Let's lower energy costs for all Americans, and let's get our economy growing again.

GAS PRICES

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

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, have you been to the gas station recently and been shocked? Gas is above \$4 a gallon, in many parts of the country, and climbing. That's 29 cents more than only a month ago. Families everywhere are feeling the pinch.

But why?

It doesn't make sense. Supply is up. We've quadrupled U.S. drilling rigs over the past 3 years. Oil production is at its highest in a decade. Last year, the import of oil fell to its lowest level in 16 years.

The answer is Wall Street speculators who buy oil and hoard it. They take it off the market and lower supply until the price goes way up. Then they sell it and make a killing off the American people. That's not fair.

We can't drill our way out of this problem. We must end Wall Street speculation, end subsidies for the oil companies, and end the political rhetoric. Let's have real solutions to the problems.

AFTER-BIRTH ABORTION

(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, on February 23, the Journal of Medical Ethics published an article, entitled, "After-birth abortion: why should the baby live?"

The authors argue that an infant child can be killed since they do not have the same moral status as a "person." They go even further to say that adoption is not always in the best interest of an unwanted child.

The furor over this article has been immense. Unfortunately, the editors defend publishing this article on the basis that there should be reasoned engagement on the subject.

This article may have the form of scholarly argument, but its substance is madness. The authors maintain that a baby can only be granted personhood through the recognition of other human beings. They fundamentally reject something that we all hold dear: that all men are endowed by their Creator with the right to life.

A healthy amount of anger over this article is not only natural but also right. It is shocking and sad to see such destructive arguments given credence in a premier medical journal.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the