

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. YODER) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving and Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask today that You bless the Members of this assembly, to be the best and the most faithful servants of the people they serve. Purify their intentions, that they will say what they believe and act consistent with their words.

Help them, indeed help us all, to be honest with themselves, so that they will be concerned not only with how their words and deeds are weighed by others, but also with how their words and deeds affect the lives of those in need and those who look to them for support, help, strength, and leadership.

May all that is done this day in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory. 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.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HAHN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. HAHN 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.

KEYSTONE XL

(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, before Congress left Washington in December, we asked the President a simple question: Will he stop blocking the Keystone XL pipeline?

Congress established laws to govern pipeline approval; the State Department published regulations; and typically, approval takes 18 to 24 months. However, Keystone has been sitting on the shelf for more than 40 months now. The President, ignoring standard procedures, ordered duplicative environmental reviews that would extend the approval process to more than 52 months.

Is this because Keystone is unprecedented? No. TransCanada has already built and operates a pipeline that crosses the U.S. border. Additionally, thousands of pipelines already crisscross the proposed route.

The difference is the political pressure brought by extreme environmental groups. Politics is blocking tens of thousands of new jobs. Politics is blocking a reliable new source of energy. It's time to stop letting politics stand in the way of a project that could help grow our economy.

STREAMLINING GOVERNMENT

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

Ms. HOCHUL. Mr. Speaker, over the last few weeks, I have traveled constantly throughout my 26th District of New York, meeting business owners and talking to them about the challenges that they are facing in this particular economic climate. Right now, they are frustrated with the various levels of government they have to go through to get an answer out of their Federal Government. It has become so burdensome that there are actually 80 different economic development agencies, four different departments, and in fact, there are 47 different job training programs. These businesses have enough on their minds and have enough challenges before them without having to solve this problem.

Fortunately, the President has come up with a plan. Last week, President Obama proposed consolidating six various entities into one, a one-stop shop for businesses, for trade so that they can get their questions answered without having complications. This is something I support, my local Chambers of Commerce support, and that's why I'm calling on this body: Let's take up this plan. Let's give the people in my district—a Republican district, I might add—what they're looking for. Streamline our government, reduce the

cost of government, save taxpayer dollars, a one-stop shop for our businesses; and once and for all, let's demonstrate to the American people that we have the capability to work together.

NEW YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOBS

(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, in early 2009, the President assured the Nation that with the passage of his stimulus bill, which has failed, the borrowing and spending would reduce unemployment and that it would not exceed 8 percent. January marks the 35th straight month that the Nation's unemployment rate has remained above 8 percent.

Last year, House Republicans followed through with their commitment to the American people and passed 28 job-creating bills, most with bipartisan support. All of these pieces of legislation remain stalled in the liberal-controlled Senate, where bills are denied debate or a vote.

Because of the gridlock in the Senate and the President's failed policies, the American people are losing faith in government officials. As we begin a new year, I hope the Senate will take immediate action for the American people by passing legislation that promotes jobs.

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

CONGRESS AND THE ECONOMY

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

Ms. CHU. I came here today wanting to wish everybody a happy new year. But when I came, I found out that our Republican Congress wanted to give everybody an unhappy old year, continuing last year's agenda of no jobs for you. They ended last year not with a bang, but a whimper, as they walked out on a deal to stop a tax hike on the middle class right before the holidays. Even though Senate Republicans had agreed to a compromise, House Republicans were willing to abandon you, just as you were trying to figure out how to pay for gifts for your children.

They were serious about letting the payroll tax and unemployment benefits expire. Thank goodness you expressed your outrage and they were forced to change their position. They gave a 2-month extension. Now in just over a month, they'll be faced with the same choice: to raise taxes for the middle class or finally work together with Democrats to give real relief to Americans like you. Make sure they do the right thing.

GRATITUDE FOR THE WELL-WISHERS

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, last month I was a sick pup. This month, I am a recovering pup. During my sick pup days, I became the beneficiary of cards and letters from well-wishers, personal visits, telephone calls, and emails. Many of these expressions originated here in the people's House. And the purpose of my 1-minute today is to convey my expression of appreciation to my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, for their generous support during that period.

LET'S INVEST IN AMERICA

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, it's 2012; and this is the year we need to create jobs and get our economy moving again. Without a growing economy, our budget deficit will only get worse. It's time that we boldly invest in America.

My friends on the Democratic side want to invest in education and infrastructure, creating jobs now and building our future. My Republican friends, on the other hand, want to cut spending on Social Security and Medicare. The Democrats want the wealthiest of Americans to pay their fair share, and my friends on the Republican side oppose even asking the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share.

We need to make the right choices this year. Let's invest in America.

□ 1210

IN MEMORY OF SPECIALIST CHRISTOPHER PATTERSON

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Specialist Christopher Patterson.

Christopher, a 2009 graduate of West Aurora High School in Illinois, came from a military family. He joined the National Guard while studying music education at Valparaiso University, but in his own words, he didn't join the Guard just for money for school. He joined to serve his country. His conviction to serve was so strong that he chose to join his Guard unit overseas when they were sent to Afghanistan, even though he could have stayed behind to continue his studies.

Just 3 weeks ago, Christopher and three other soldiers were working in the Kandahar province of Afghanistan to clear combat routes for convoys to pass through when an IED detonated and took his life.

Today we honor Christopher and the ultimate sacrifice he paid for our country and give our thoughts and prayers

to his family and friends during this difficult time. We are, and will remain, eternally grateful for Christopher's service and sacrifice to our country.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROGRAM IN WEST NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the West New York, New Jersey, School District for their efforts to promote nutrition and physical education at school as part of the Healthy Schools Program.

Last week, President Clinton visited PS #2 in West New York to praise the Board of Education for its efforts in transforming the school system's nutritional program. This was part of the Alliance for a Healthy Schools Program to reduce childhood obesity. During his visit, President Clinton was able to see firsthand how the school has embraced nutrition and wellness.

West New York has a history of being recognized by the Alliance for nutritional achievement. PS #2 received a Bronx National Recognition Award in 2009 and a Silver National Recognition Award in 2010 for their efforts to provide students with a fresher, more nutritional meal plan.

In 2010, my high school alma mater, Memorial High School, received the first and only Gold National Recognition Award given by the Alliance. And last October, the Alliance awarded Sal Valenza, the food service director of West New York, the distinction of the Healthy Schools Program Champion.

I am honored to represent a school district that emphasizes healthy lifestyles, and I am pleased that West New York has been recognized for their efforts.

FEATHER CREEK FLOODING

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to light a problem that's facing my constituents in Clinton, Indiana. Feather Creek floods over 100 times per year, damaging the same homes year after year. In 2008, many of the homes filled completely with water, leaving only their roofs to be recognizable.

The Army Corps of Engineers has been working on the project for many years, including numerous environmental studies and surveys of the land, but the flooding does continue. The Army Corps, to their credit, held a town hall last week in Clinton, where they heard from over 300 residents about the damage this flooding has been causing them for decades. The estimated cost of the project is \$900,000.

I do appreciate the willingness of the Army Corps of Engineers, specifically, Colonel Leonard, to meet with my staff and constituents, and I urge the Corps

to remember what they heard in Clinton, Indiana, last week and complete the Feather Creek project as quickly as possible. My constituents deserve no less than a safe environment, free from the threats of yearly floods.

BUFFALO BILLS BLACKOUTS

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss an issue of great importance to western New York, the Buffalo Bills.

The Bills have one of the most dedicated fan bases of any football franchise in the entire country. Since 1960, Bills fans have embraced and supported the team, both emotionally and financially. Today, the Buffalo Bills franchise is an integral part of the New York State economy. But harsh blackout provisions threaten New Yorkers' ability to watch their team on television.

The blackout rule requires that a stadium be sold out 72 hours in advance in order to broadcast a football game locally. In Buffalo, this means that, in order to avoid a blackout, the Bills must sell more tickets than the league average in one of the league's smallest markets. Last year, almost half of the Bills' home games were blacked out. This is unacceptable.

This morning I sent a letter to the FCC Chairman asking that he eliminate this unfair rule, which does not provide for individual solutions to different local markets. The FCC has opened a public comment period on this matter, and I urge fans who feel similarly to do the same. In the meantime, I will continue this fight.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

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

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago the White House announced that it was going to reject the Keystone XL pipeline. The White House did this among a backdrop with record high gas prices in January. A major factor in these high gas prices is the continued political upheaval in the Middle East and the impact that it's having on economic uncertainty around the world.

Keystone would bring nearly a million barrels of oil from our friendly neighbor, Canada, to the north and also up to 100,000 barrels of oil from the Bakken discoveries in Montana and North Dakota. It would also put more Americans to work while improving our energy security.

The Department of Energy has stated that "gasoline prices in all markets served by the gulf coast and east coast refiners would decrease" as a result of the pipeline's construction.

The White House would be well-advised to consider a poll that I took in