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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

Dr. Michael T. Whitson, First Baptist Church Indian Trail, Indian Trail, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God and Heavenly Father, we acknowledge Your holiness, Your goodness, Your faithfulness, and Your undying love that forgives our transgressions. We confess before You our total inability to make ourselves righteous before You, and we bless You for providing a way of forgiveness and a path to know You.

Drawing from Your unfailing Word of the prayer of King Asa, a powerful King of long ago, who cried out to You and said: "Lord, there is no one like You to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, Lord our God, for we rely on You."

You established leaders over this Nation. May we acknowledge and recognize You as our only source of strength. Your Word convinces us that we can do nothing without You. Because of that, help us to totally trust You in all things. May Your cause be our cause.

We humbly ask in Your matchless name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. MAST 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 DR. MICHAEL T. WHITSON

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to introduce America to First Baptist Church Indian Trail in the person of Pastor Mike Whitson, who opened us in prayer.

Pastor Whitson celebrated this past month his 40th anniversary in the pulpit at First Baptist.

Indian Trail? You may ask, what is Indian Trail? It is a small town, I would say, immediately east of Charlotte, North Carolina, except that is not quite right. The mayor of Stallings, North Carolina, is in the gallery. Stallings is immediately east of Charlotte, and Indian Trail is immediately east of Stallings.

It is a small town, and in its midst, the institution of First Baptist Church has over 7,000 members. In the course of the pastorate of Mike Whitson, more than 7,000 people have been baptized, and they have two satellite campuses.

In 1992, they began the Metrolina Christian Academy, which now matriculates 1,477 students in one of the largest K-12 private schools in our State. There is ministry after ministry—to the county jail, a Russian language ministry. Where God undertakes to do His will, it can be in the most unexpected of places.

It was related in the church's celebration of Mike's pastorate and his 40th anniversary that, in the early days, Mike would surprise everyone,

certainly the men of the church, when he would bid them a farewell by saying: I love you.

At first, they were taken aback, but after a time, they began saying to Pastor Whitson: I love you.

That is what Pastor Whitson has meant, and the work of the Lord through him and in him is a masterful thing for the Nation to behold.

It is my honor to have had him here in the House Chamber today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAST). The Chair will entertain up to five further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Memorial Day.

Our Nation's greatness was earned by the sacrifices of a few so that freedom and liberty would come to all.

This weekend, we remember their sacrifices and their service. Every year on the last Monday of May, people across this Nation gather in town squares, at memorials, and in cemeteries of our fallen heroes to pay tribute to those who gave it all. This Nation is united by our liberties and freedoms that our men and women in uniform take an oath to protect and defend.

We will always honor our brothers and sisters who fought in battle to uphold our way of life, and we will never stop searching for those who are missing.

May God always carry them and all our servicemembers in the palm of His hand.

□ 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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This Memorial Day, as we raise the Stars and Stripes, as we lay wreaths at monuments, memorials, and cemeteries, let us remember that our freedom is thanks to those who served and those who died in sacrifice.

CELEBRATING BEN TAUB HOSPITAL

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

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the 60th anniversary of Ben Taub Hospital.

The Harris County hospital district was created in November 1965 by a voter referendum. The hospital district remains a leader in indigent care in my home State of Texas, and the center of the system is the acute trauma center at Ben Taub Hospital.

The hospital cares for more than 80,000 emergency patients each year who are in the most critical need. At Ben Taub, world-class doctors treat everyone regardless of their income, their gender, their insurance, or their immigration status.

The doctors, nurses, support staff, and administrators are not just well known and respected locally for their training and patient care but also internationally.

I am so grateful to have them serving my district and my constituents. I thank Ben Taub Hospital for 60 years of level one care, and may they have the best and most successful 60 more years to come.

PROTECTING INNOCENT LIVES FROM FENTANYL

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

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, the communities throughout the Sixth Congressional District of Virginia and, in fact, every community across our Nation are now border communities because of the deadly fentanyl pouring through our open borders under the failed leadership of President Joe Biden and Secretary Mayorkas.

Since October, Customs and Border Patrol agents have seized over 14,000 pounds of fentanyl, enough to kill over 3.1 billion people. Even in western Virginia, drug cartels have been caught smuggling rainbow-colored fentanyl with the intent of targeting our children.

Just last year, roughly 75,000 people died of drug overdoses from synthetic opioids, largely illicit fentanyl or fentanyl-related substances.

That is why, today, the House will be voting for the HALT Fentanyl Act because enough is enough.

This legislation would raise penalties for fentanyl traffickers under the Controlled Substances Act, support research to understand the devastating

mental health effects of fentanyl-related substances, and supply law enforcement with the resources needed to keep this drug off our streets.

While our President has no plans to fix open borders or stop deadly fentanyl from being smuggled into our interior, the House will take action today to protect innocent lives by passing this important legislation.

DEFAULT'S EFFECTS ON VETERANS

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, meet Celly, a constituent of mine living in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago.

He is an Army veteran and a cancer survivor, and he has received 100 percent disabled veterans benefits due to his trauma as he was serving for us in the service. He is currently enrolled in a VA program to become a paralegal.

Celly called my office because he was worried. He was concerned that the veterans benefits that he relies upon could be snatched away by the Republican default. That is a real possibility.

His VA benefits cover his rent, his medication, and his treatments.

VETERANS' HEALTHCARE NOT UP FOR DEBATE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call on my Republican colleagues to stop threatening to default on America's bills if we don't agree to their absurd demands to immediately cut \$2 billion from veterans' healthcare programs.

Last week, I spoke to Piscataway American Legion Commander Ron Veliky, who told me: "The medical needs of veterans should not be up for debate."

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more. This Memorial Day weekend, our veterans and our seniors shouldn't have to worry about Republican demands that will cut their healthcare benefits or jeopardize their Social Security benefits.

As we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice on Memorial Day, I hope my Republican colleagues are inspired to join Democrats in committing to pay our Nation's bills.

RESOLVE THE DEBT CEILING

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

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because of my concern that, in less than 1 week, the United States of

America may default on its debt and its obligations.

I know we all want to get home for Memorial Day. We want to celebrate and honor our fallen heroes, the men and women who have served our country. The best way for us to honor those heroes and the best way for us to honor the American public is to pass the debt ceiling.

That is what we do. We teach our kids to pay their debts, and we teach families to pay their debts. That is what we ought to do.

I am all for negotiating spending cuts, but that is what a budget negotiation is for, not a debt ceiling to pay our debt.

Let's honor our veterans and honor our fallen heroes at Memorial Day parades. Let's stay here, get this done, and fly home to celebrate and honor Memorial Day and honor our veterans. Let's get this done.

GOP IS HOLDING AMERICAN ECONOMY HOSTAGE

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, Republicans packed their expensive suits and dresses this morning, and they are leaving town.

The American economy is being held hostage by Republicans as they try to push their harmful agenda to strip millions of dollars from Americans and the benefits they rely on.

In my home State of New York, the default on America bill could strip 2.3 million people of health insurance.

The default on America bill would also strip nutrition programs from 126,000 women, infants, and children in New York State.

The GOP plan to impose work requirements for SNAP recipients would also burden those recipients with useless paperwork while doing absolutely nothing to lower reliance on safety net programs.

Republicans are trying to strip benefits from the American people. They are trying to pull the wool over our eyes.

This is the default on America act working against America.

HALT ALL LETHAL TRAFFICKING OF FENTANYL ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). Pursuant to House Resolution 429 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 467.

Will the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) kindly take the chair.

□ 0914

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole