

Lord God, author of truth and creator of beauty, cherry blossoms in Washington usher in spring to the Nation.

May new life be made manifest in Congress this term, bringing glory to Your holy name and peace and prosperity to the cities and fields of the land.

Lord, as You inspire creativity in artists, engineers and scientists, also stir aspirations of hopeful negotiations in troublesome areas of the world and in the corridors of government.

May the seeds of peace and the beginnings of deeper understanding grow in the hearts and minds of Your people.

This we ask, 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 his approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. McNULTY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. McNULTY 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 Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 25. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the application of Airbus for launch aid.

RIDICULOUS, WASTEFUL SPENDING AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, the Scripps-Howard News Service recently ran a story about what it describes as "Capitol Hill's extravagant new visitors center."

The story said: "Another year and another \$37 million in unforeseen cost increases" in what is becoming an annual sad joke.

There have been so many examples of ridiculous, wasteful spending at the Federal level over the last 30 or 40 years that it seems the Federal Government cannot do anything in an economical, efficient manner.

The Scripps-Howard story said: "Originally estimated to cost \$40 mil-

lion, the project has grown into a 5-story Taj Mahal that so far has cost taxpayers \$454 million."

The current final cost is estimated to be \$559 million, and Citizens Against Government Waste describes it as "monumental waste."

Apparently, if we want something to cost about 10 times more than it should, just let the Federal Government do it.

Those who are in charge of managing this project should be ashamed and embarrassed, but all they will probably do is laugh at these comments, since the money is not coming out of their pockets.

LATINOS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to voice my concerns regarding Social Security privatization and how it is going to affect hardworking Hispanics and Latino families and especially the women Latinas.

About 46 percent of older Latinas depend entirely on Social Security in retirement. In fact, 60 percent of Latinas over the age of 65 would live in poverty if they did not receive Social Security.

If President Bush privatizes Social Security, young Latinas in their 20s and 30s will see their benefits cut by at least 30 percent.

Latina moms rely on Social Security also if their husbands become injured or die. The work injury rate for Hispanics in the year 2000 was 16 percent compared to 11 percent of the overall population. Therefore, Social Security disability benefits are particularly important for Latinas and their families.

The President's plan will not help Latinos or our families. Let us start talking about real solutions, helping our families that work very hard day in and day out.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, we have heard all about the problems with Social Security many times here on the House floor: looming deficits, benefit cuts, payroll tax hikes. These problems are very real, and they are just around the corner if we do not act.

With that being said, my colleagues across the aisle continue to criticize, continue to say to the American people that there is no problem when, in fact, the 2005 Trustees Report showed the problem to be crystal clear. Social Security will begin paying out more than it collects in 2017. By 2041, the Social Security system as we know it will be insolvent with not enough money to pay 100 percent of the promised benefits.

Raising payroll taxes is not a solution. Just look at our history. Payroll taxes have been increased over 20 times since Social Security began.

Madam Speaker, across the aisle we hear the same old rhetoric of why things will not work. The question I have for them is what are their proposals to fix Social Security?

The challenges with Social Security are not Republican, and they are not Democrat. This is a challenge for all Americans, and I call upon those across the aisle to help us find a solution. Let us put people above politics.

IT IS TIME TO END THE DEATH TAX NOW

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, the gibberish my colleagues just heard about is the President says everything's on the table. We can reform Social Security.

Madam Speaker, this week the United States House will vote to eliminate the unfair death tax.

Believe it or not, the government gives you a certificate at birth, a license when you marry and a tax bill when you die. Is that not a shame?

Taxing people when they die smacks of all the things that are wrong with the government and Washington.

The death tax was created to target people like the Vanderbilts and the Rockefellers, with the original intent of paying and winning World War I. This bill hits hardworking Americans. The death tax hurts the mom-and-pop shops on Main Street, and that is just not fair.

Sadly, now if a person saved for the future, put some money away, built a business, ran a farm or achieved the American Dream in other ways, the death tax punishes them.

That is just wrong, and it is time to end the death tax now.

ANNOUNCING 527 FAIRNESS ACT

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

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, the summer of 2004 will be remembered for many years in American politics.

Groups organized on the left and the right under what was known as section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code and spent more than \$300 million to support candidates, while the two major political parties and the Nation's most respected labor unions, associations, businesses, and constitutional groups watched in silence from the sidelines.

In response to this summer of 527s, some in Washington will bring measures to rein in the 527 groups with greater government control and regulation, and that is certainly their right.

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN), a Democratic Congressman,