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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 16, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROBERT B. ADERHOLT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord our God, You live among Your people and guide the destiny of the Nation. In and through the free election of Your people, You have brought to this moment of history the Members of this 109th Congress to be Your instrument of representative leadership and create the laws that will bind people together and move this country in a deliberated direction.

The consequences of decisions made here, Lord, will have international effects around the world. Issues left unattended will leave many of Your people in the darkness of alienation.

So, Lord, once again, we call upon You to be the true and lasting ruler of this Nation, because this government of the people turns to You in faith, now and forever. 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CONAWAY 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 without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 269. Concurrent resolution recognizing the 40th anniversary of the White House Fellows Program.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1499. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow members of the Armed Forces serving in a combat zone to make contributions to their individual retirement plans even if the compensation on which such contribution is based is excluded from gross income, and for other purposes.

TEXAS RICE NEEDS TO GO TO CUBA

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, southeast Texas has over 40,000 acres of rice fields. Until recently, the combined acreage of rice farms in the State of Texas was about 600,000 acres. That is bigger than the State of Rhode Island. Hometown rice farmers, like my friend Ray Stoesser, are seriously struggling, however. Ray, like most rice farmers, simply wants more markets to sell American rice.

The House and Senate versions of the Treasury, Transportation appropriations bill enhanced markets and included language that would allow agricultural trade to Cuba. The conference report, however, stripped that language out and maintains the current trade embargo. The conferees' refusal to allow rice trade to Cuba defies common sense. It places politics above American farmers like Ray Stoesser, not to mention it is bad for the American economy.

The Cuban people will continue to eat rice. If we do not sell it to them, they will get it from that communist nation Vietnam. We hear talk of free trade. NAFTA, CAFTA, we trade with the Communists in China, but not selling rice to Cuba does not punish Castro and his Communists. It punishes American rice farmers.

Mr. Speaker, this ought not to be.

GOP ENERGY CHARADE

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, it is time the Republicans stop their Big Oil dog and pony show.

Last week, the oil CEOs testified that the companies had not met with the Vice President in his office in developing the energy policy. Well, in today's Washington Post, those documents show that they in fact in 2000 did meet with the Vice President and administration officials.

Of course they were involved in the development of the energy legislation. How else do you get \$16.5 billion in taxpayer-funded subsidies at a time when oil is trading at \$60 a barrel? None of the back-room deals come as a surprise or a shock to any of us. The old adage: just follow the money.

What is shocking is my Republican colleagues think they can hold a PR

□ 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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stunt and the American people will forget the private meetings and the \$16.5 billion in gifts that the Republican Congress has provided Big Oil. Republicans should know it is wrong to hand out billions of dollars to oil companies at a time when they are making record profits and then cut home heating assistance to the elderly. But they do not forget.

The paper trail is too thick for the Republicans to hide their cozy relationship with Big Oil. The record is finally cleared up. Big Oil, Vice President CHENEY, the Republican Congress, what a team. It gives a whole new meaning to family.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change and time for new priorities.

SETTING THE HISTORICAL RECORD STRAIGHT

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to set the historical record straight. As my colleague JEB HENSARLING recently stated, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own set of facts."

Prior to the war, Members of Congress had access to the same intelligence as the administration did, and it was determined that Saddam Hussein posed a serious threat to the United States.

The 2002 resolution authorizing the use of force received overwhelming bipartisan support, but now some make it seem otherwise. Charges being leveled at this administration that somehow prewar intelligence reports were manipulated are false and unworthy of this body.

The facts are clear. The 2004 Senate Intelligence Committee report stated that there was no evidence of manipulated intelligence in relation to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities. The bipartisan Robb-Silbermann commission in 2005 reached the same conclusion.

Attempts to distort these facts are an attempt to revise history. Doing so undercuts the efforts of our troops and undermines our national security.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY RUSSELL

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Nancy Russell is a woman of great courage, vision, and determination who has made heroic efforts in protecting the Columbia River Gorge. Her singleness of purpose and determination was a driving force that led to the unique Gorge National Scenic Area legislation in 1986.

She and her late husband, Bruce Russell, made significant personal financial commitments securing the purchase of key properties and easements. Without Nancy and her efforts, this na-

tional treasure would undoubtedly have been spoiled by sprawling development, pollution, and traffic.

Nancy Russell and her efforts have earned much recognition and acclaim, but perhaps nothing is as meaningful as when hundreds of her friends, supporters, and admirers gathered this weekend to honor her in the 25th anniversary of the advocacy group she founded, the Friends of the Columbia River Gorge.

Notwithstanding her recognition, the true legacy of Nancy Russell is to be found every time anybody hikes, bikes, drives, or flies over the magnificent Columbia River Gorge, which she has protected for generations to come.

DEMOCRAT OBSTRUCTIONISM

(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, Democrats and President Bush have consistently and truthfully said that Saddam Hussein was a threat to our country. In the 2002 war debate, Senator HILLARY CLINTON said, "If left unchecked, Saddam Hussein will continue to increase his capability to wage biological and chemical warfare." Liberal Democrat NANCY PELOSI declared, "Saddam Hussein certainly has chemical and biological weapons." Howard Dean vowed, "There is no question that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the United States and our allies."

However, since losing the 2004 election, Democrats have developed a disturbing case of obstructionism and now falsely claim that President Bush exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Why would Democrats go from agreeing with President Bush in supporting our mission in Iraq to slandering our Commander in Chief and questioning our troops' efforts? Politics, pure and simple politics.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, in this morning's Washington Post, one of the paper's columnists implied that I and other Members who oppose Medicare cuts are simply "demonizing Republicans."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I hate to break it to you, but I am more concerned with the people who live in my district than the current image problems affecting the Republican Party. Truly, what concerns the people in my district is what Congress is considering doing this week.

We are right now waiting to see the latest version of a bill that takes away food from children, makes it more difficult for young people to go to college, and slashes funding for foster parents.

I know that many of my colleagues would like to spin this bill as a fine example of fiscal discipline; but rather than taking from children, why do we not think we should start with, oh, I do not know, honestly accounting for future deficit projections, or eliminating billion-dollar pork barrel projects for the chairmen of certain committees, or how about an open and competitive bid on huge government contracts.

Five years ago, Mr. Speaker, this country had record surpluses. In half a decade, we have dishonest accounting, the largest deficit in history, and a budget reconciliation process that is conducted behind closed doors. Believing that America can do better is not a partisan attack.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, Congress will soon debate much-needed immigration reforms. One of the most pressing matters is the sad state of technology used to process immigration case files. The U.S. Customs and Immigration Service uses paper printouts to process over 7 million applications per year.

To address this glaring deficiency, I am introducing the Comprehensive Immigration Data and Technology Accountability Act. This legislation will do three things. First, it will create a database that allows real-time access to pending casework and move to a fully electronic system. Second, the database will be linked to Federal law enforcement agencies, reducing the number of illegal immigrants released into our communities. Third, the legislation sets deadlines for the planning, implementation, and review of the new database.

It is past time that we used the fee-based immigration system to upgrade technology and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our application process. It is the right thing to do for Americans, and it is the right thing to do for those coming to America.

STANDING UP FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to speak on behalf of the American people. The American people want us to stand up and fight these dastardly budget cuts to the needy at a time when this country is in such great pain. We have just gone through the visceral attacks of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. The American people are suffering. They are hurting. At the very same time that we are hurting and suffering the most, this Republican-led Congress and