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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Monsignor Mark J. Giordani, Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Paterson, NJ, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Father of all peoples and nations, we come before You to thank You for our Nation. Through our Founding Fathers, You have created the United States of America to be one nation under God.

Give us Your spirit to enlighten and empower us to enact laws that embody Your truth, justice, compassion, and peace. Teach us how to humble ourselves before You that both personally and as public servants we may exemplify Your integrity, honesty, and high moral character.

Father, make us Your beacon of light, not only financially, militarily, and through technology, but spiritually. If our spiritual roots decay, we will die. Let our love for our true freedom, liberty, and justice for all authentically shine in the midst of all peoples and nations.

Father, fulfill in our Nation and in all nations the words of Jesus Christ: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

We ask You this through Christ our Lord. 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 Texas, Mr. PETE GEREN, come for-

ward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PETE GEREN of Texas 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

The SPEAKER. The Chair will recognize fifteen 1-minute speeches on each side.

WELCOMING REV. MSGR. MARK J. GIORDANI

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

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, today I welcome to the House of Representatives a good friend of all of the people of the Eighth Congressional District of New Jersey, Monsignor Mark J. Giordani.

Monsignor Giordani is not only a spiritual leader but also a renowned civic activist in the finest sense of the word. He is a man whom I have come to admire and respect.

As a young child, he lost his father to the anger of Italian fascists. Following this tragic incident, his mother turned to the strength of Christianity and instilled this faith in her son. This guiding force led the monsignor to a new and spiritual life in America.

Upon immigrating to the United States, the monsignor received a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy from St. Bonaventure University and a master's of divinity from Christ the King Seminary in New York.

During his seminary years, the monsignor dedicated endless hours to the poor, cultivating a passion to help the most unfortunate in our community. This passion was fulfilled through his appointment as a copastor of St.

Gerard's parish in New Jersey. He was responsible for the founding of several local charitable organizations.

On November 1, 1987, Monsignor Giordani was appointed rector of St. John's Cathedral, and serves as spiritual leader day in and day out, offering his overwhelming kindness. No person is ever considered too big or too small to receive the attention of Monsignor Giordani.

Mr. Speaker, Monsignor Giordani is a spiritual pillar in our community. I offer admiration for his past and continued good services. Indeed, the people of the Eighth Congressional District of New Jersey have well become richer through the deeds, efforts, and spiritual guidance of the monsignor.

SENIOR CITIZENS BEWARE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the senior citizens of this country better beware again, because the Republicans once again have unveiled their budget resolution for this year, and it cuts Medicare and Medicaid drastically in order to once again provide tax breaks for the wealthiest in this country. Even worse, it actually changes the Medicare and Medicaid programs so much that we would not even recognize them.

Seniors are going to be forced into managed care systems because of balanced billing provisions. We expect that they will also be paying a lot more money out of their own pockets in order to pay for Medicare.

The cuts in the Medicare Part A Program that finances hospitals and health care institutions are even more severe essentially than previously suggested, and what that means is a lot of hospitals not only in urban areas but in rural areas and throughout the country will actually be forced to close because

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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they will not be getting the money from the Federal Government that they need in order to continue to operate.

What we are seeing here again is the Republican agenda, which is essentially to destroy Medicare as we know it and create a second-class health care system for senior citizens.

DEMOCRATS WOULD SHUT DOWN GOVERNMENT AGAIN

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that liberal Democrats want to protect big government and that they are addicted to special interest money. But it is interesting to see the lengths to which they will go in order to protect the status quo here in Washington.

Earlier this week, a Democrat leader said the following: "We are simply going to shut this place down."

What that means Mr. Speaker, is that the liberals in the Democratic Party are so extreme that they are willing to put a halt to the business of Congress in order to do the bidding of the union bosses here in Washington.

What it also means is there may be no gas tax repeal. No Medicare reform. No welfare reform. No tax relief for America's families. And no balanced budget.

It is sad that a once-proud party has resorted to extremism and blackmail to force their special interest agenda on the American people.

HIGHER GAS PRICES MEAN UNPRECEDENTED OIL COMPANY PROFITS

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, has anyone noticed what has happened to the stocks of oil companies in this country? Their profits have gone up phenomenally. Exxon made \$2 billion in the last 3 months. Other companies have shown profits in the range of 40 percent. Unprecedented profits.

Of course, it is all a result of a corporate decision, knowing that we had had a very harsh winter, that if they deliberately reduced their reserves and knowing there was going to be strong demand, they would be able to push the price way up. Of course they can all get together and increase the price at the pump so that consumers pay for this increase, and boy, has it paid off. Look at the corporate executive of the six largest oil companies. Their stock options alone in the last 60 days have increased by \$33 million. Unbelievable.

But should we really let the consumer pay for these profits? Of course not. To think that the consequences of their decision is going to be paid by consumers is unconscionable.

THE DO-NOTHING DEMOCRATS

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

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago Harry Truman attacked the do-nothing Congress, and I think 48 years later Truman would be saying the same thing of the do-nothing Democrats.

Last year we got elected to do some very specific things. We got elected to provide a balanced budget, the first balanced budget in a generation. The do-nothing Democrats fault it. The do-nothing President vetoed it.

Now he is doing the same thing with the gas tax. We want a straight reduction to cut gas taxes. We are providing it. The do-nothing Democrats once again are standing in the way. The do-nothing Democrats once again are threatening a veto.

Talk about tax cuts, we provided tax cuts for middle-class families. The do-nothing Democrats fought it. The President vetoed a \$500 per child tax cut. They increased taxes in 1993 on senior citizens up to 85 percent of their earnings. We offered relief. The do-nothing Democrats vetoed it.

Most importantly, I think, on Medicare, they know Medicare is going broke. We did something about it. The do-nothing Democrats vetoed it and shamelessly demagogued the issue, and are willing to throw the senior citizens out in the cold.

BUDGET RERUNS

(Mrs. KENNELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the majority presented their budget for the next year. The press release from this body, we really could not tell what was in it. It was rhetoric. However, if we looked at the press release from the Senate, the other body, we saw some numbers so we could find out somewhat what was in the budget.

What I could understand is, it is a rerun of proposals that were vetoed by the President late last year and have no support by the American people.

One proposal in particular should deeply concern us. This budget proposes reducing the amount that States must spend on medical services for our Nation's poorest. This will set off a race to the bottom, one where no State wins by behaving responsibly and where the big losers in America are the poorest and the sickest.

We ought to be fighting to protect these people, not abandoning them. I worry about this year's budget now.

POISON PEN VETOES

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Bill Clinton was in high dudgeon

yesterday at his press conference. This morning's Washington Times said it was "An afternoon of flapdoodle and balderdash." That is probably an understatement.

Yesterday, Bill Clinton accused Republicans of using a poison pill.

Well, let's talk about Bill Clinton's poison pen.

Bill Clinton's poison pen vetoed the first balanced budget to a reach President's desk in a generation.

Bill Clinton's poison pen vetoed Medicare reform. Now, our grandparents risk seeing Medicare go bankrupt because of Bill Clinton wants to demagog the issue.

Bill Clinton's poison pen vetoed the \$500 per child tax credit that would have help millions of struggling families make ends meet.

Bill Clinton's poison pen vetoed welfare reform. Not once, but twice. Millions of Americans will never know the dignity of work because Bill Clinton refuses to fix the failed welfare state. Instead of keeping his promises, Bill Clinton would rather use his poison pen to veto the wishes of the American people.

LESSONS NOT LEARNED

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, last year the American public witnessed the Republicans shutting down the U.S. Federal Government so they could try and force the President of the United States to cut Medicare, to give tax cuts to the wealthy.

Apparently the Republicans have learned nothing from their repudiation by the American people of that budget because they are back again this year. They are back again today cutting over \$168 billion out of Medicare, reducing the spending below the rate of inflation for senior citizens, which means that senior citizens will have less money to purchase the health care that they have today in the future.

What will they do with that money? Not repair the Medicare account. They are going to give that money in capital gains tax to some of the wealthiest people in this Nation.

That is what the country repudiated last year when they shut down the Government. That is what the country is going to repudiate this year, and senior citizen ought to understand that the Republicans are back, same old budget, same old ploy, and the same old cuts in Medicare to give tax cuts to the wealthy.

REPEAL THE GAS TAX

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

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, in 1993 President Clinton imposed the largest tax increase in American history on the citizens of this country. As