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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:00 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 26, 1998.

I hereby designate the Honorable MAC COLLINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

With gratefulness and praise, with high hopes and anticipation, with a sense of thankfulness and with hearts of appreciation, we welcome this new day of grace. Of all Your blessings, O God, that fill the hours and nurture us until our last time, we pray for knowledge to understand our tasks and wisdom to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong. May Your peace, gracious God, fill our hearts and souls with comfort and commitment that we may serve people in justice and in righteousness. This is our earnest prayer. 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 Illinois (Mr. RUSH)

come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RUSH 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 announces there will be 15 one-minute speeches from each side.

WAKE UP CALL ON EDUCATION

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, in the most recent international education survey conducted on U.S. high school seniors, U.S. ranks near the bottom in math and science. The math category alone, our students ranked 21st out of 23 countries.

My purpose this morning is not to shame the American youth nor blame our hard working teachers in this country, but rather to give a wake-up call to my colleagues.

For too long our liberal, but well-intended, colleagues have squandered billions of Federal education dollars on national testing and bloated Washington bureaucracy. It is high time they stop wasting money and start directing more money and more control to our parents, teachers, and communities.

Let us face it, parents and teachers are the people who know our kids the best. I have a 10-year-old son in Nevada's public school system. I would much rather have the parents and teachers and school officials in Reno, Nevada, decide what is best for my son's education rather than some know-it-all Washington bureaucrat.

Please, for the sake of our children, let us get America's education system on track by keeping big government out of our school systems.

STOP BLOCKING COMMON-SENSE MANAGED CARE REFORM

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, the Speaker says this body will not vote on common-sense managed care reform until we have a "vision discussion."

I have a vision for the Speaker. Envision this: Janet Drouin, 32-year-old woman from Stafford Springs, Connecticut. Janet was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy and lymph node dissection. She was kicked out of the hospital only 36 hours after the surgery, in incredible pain, and with drainage tubes protruding through her chest.

Janet had two toddlers at the time. She was unable to take care of her children herself. She could not go to the bathroom by herself. She could not even get out of bed. The Speaker and the Republican leadership are clearly more worried about collecting the campaign checks from the health insurance industry than protecting the health and the well-being of people like Janet Drouin.

I urge the Republican leadership, stop blocking commonsense managed care reform. Schedule a vote today.

A TAX CUT FOR AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the Congress to pass legislation that would give the average American consumer a 30 percent tax cut. We can

□ 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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do this without breaking the caps, without finding offsets, and without spending the surplus. We can do this without even going to a flat tax or consumption tax. We can do this by breaking up the electricity monopoly.

The time has come to allow greater competition in the electricity industry. Giving consumers the power, the power to choose their electric company, will lead to a more efficient and cheaper electric industry. When we deregulated trucking and the airline industry and the telephone monopoly, the average savings to the American consumer was 30 percent. We can do the same with the electricity industry.

Let us give America's consumers the power to choose, and let us do it this year.

WOMEN FORCIBLY STERILIZED

(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, I rise today to share a tragic story of an outrageous misuse of U.S. taxpayer dollars believed to go to foreign aid.

Recently a government campaign in the country of Peru revealed how USAID taxpayer dollars have been used over the past 2 years. What were these dollars used for, you ask: Community buildup, economic development, money to buy clean, sanitary medical conditions? No. Our taxpayer dollars have been put to use under the USAID banner for forced, mandatory, and coerced sterilization of poor Peruvian women.

Have these women chosen such paths for their reproductive futures? Have they been able to discuss options with their families and husbands? No. Without notification and without consent, U.S.-funded operatives perform these sterilizations in filthy, primitive conditions just to meet a mandated quota.

Women have been degraded. Indeed, women have died because of this policy in the name of population control, and under the guise of family planning America has exported horror to women abroad.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should end taxpayer funding of such atrocities, once and for all.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF MARK ZALKIN

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the life, work, soul, and spirit of a dear friend, Mark Zalkin. Mark's life was tragically cut short on Monday as he passed at the age of 49 due to complications from multiple sclerosis.

During the seventies Mark's vision for justice translated into him building and leading the 46th Ward Community Service Center, and later the Uptown

Community Service Center. He worked tirelessly to create services to Chicago's uptown neighborhood.

One of Mark's unique qualities was his steadfast belief in the wisdom and power of people. As editor of Keep Strong Magazine and All Chicago City News, and as press strategist for the late Harold Washington, the mayor of the city of Chicago, Mark always went first to people for information and to find out what was really happening. The disabled coal miner fighting for black lung benefits or the family displaced by suspected arson for profit, these were the people who Mark went to for information.

When Mark was stricken with MS, he faced life with the same quiet strength and determination he radiated all his life. My prayers go out to Mark's family, and especially to his son Brendan, who carries on his tradition and legacy as editor of Chicago's Streetwise newspaper.

TAX CUTS AND DEBT RELIEF, THE BEST CHOICES FOR USE OF THE BUDGET SURPLUS

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, after nearly three decades of Washington living beyond its means, the Federal budget is projected to have a surplus next year of several billions of dollars.

So Congress has a choice. Actually, we have three choices. We can spend the surplus, we can use the surplus to start paying down the debt, or we can continue with the tax relief started last year. Guess what the liberals want to do with the surplus? You got it, they want to spend it. They want to increase the size and power of the Federal Government.

I think that is about the last thing that Washington should do with the surplus. The way I look at it, if Congress uses the surplus for tax relief, that would be great. If the surplus goes towards reducing the debt, that would be great, too. Both would represent a radical change from the way Congress has been operating in recent decades, when the other side was in the majority.

Maybe we should take tax cuts and debt relief and go 50/50. The Americans want a debate on this. They do not want us to spend the money.

REFORM THE IRS

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, unbelievable, the IRS admits it is wrong and vows to fix it. That is right, they said no more taking of property by individual agents, only district directors of the IRS can seize your property.

How nice of those computer bullies. Think about it. Instead of getting shafted by a little guy at the IRS, you will now get shafted by a big shot at the IRS. Beam me up.

I say it is time to tell the IRS to seize this, my bill, that requires judicial consent before those backstabbing, bric-a-bracken, Constitution-bending thieves destroy any more lives in our country, and that bill should be added to the conference report of the reform bill for the IRS.

IN SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

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

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 856, a bill that provides the process of self-determination for Puerto Rico. Since we are talking about U.S. citizens, why should this bill be necessary? This bill is essential in order to validate American democratic values. It is essential because the 3,800,000 U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico have been disenfranchised and this Congress has a moral obligation to address this inequity.

In Puerto Rico, we cannot vote to elect the President of our Nation, nor do we have any voting representation in the House or the Senate. We have no control over political decisions affecting our daily lives. We cannot vote as citizens, but we are called upon to fight and die for our country as soldiers.

The U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico have been partners in war with our fellow citizens, having fought hand in hand to defend American values and democratic ideals throughout the world in every armed conflict since 1917.

Puerto Ricans have earned with their blood the right to self-determination. As the United States preaches to the world on human rights and democracy, it has forgotten 3.8 million of its own citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues to support H.R. 856. It is our moral obligation and responsibility. Let the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico choose whether they want to be independent, stay as they are, or become a State. Vote in support of H.R. 856.

IRS REFORM

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Americans who take an increasingly cynical view of politics and politicians often claim that "politicians are all the same," and those who do not vote justify their passivity saying "it does not matter."

I respectfully disagree. Consider the proposals to reform the IRS. The Democratic Party controlled Congress for a period of 40 years, ending in 1995.