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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. PEASE).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 4, 1998.

I hereby designate the Honorable EDWARD A. PEASE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

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

We are grateful, O God, that in a world that often is marked by perplexity and confusion, there are proud moments of renewal that encourage us in the depths of our souls and help us to see a brighter and more noble future. Whenever we anticipate new ideas, new responsibilities, new aspirations or ambitions, our hearts and minds, our very beings can be invigorated and sustained by the opportunities before us. Of all your gifts, gracious God, for which we give boundless thanks, it is for the gift of life with all its wonder and all its glory. Make us conscious of this very special gift so that we will lead lives of gratitude and of praise. 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 New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SAXTON 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 PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minute speeches on each side.

IRA PLAN TO ENTER SOCIAL SECURITY SWEEPSTAKES

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

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, on February 27, 1997, I introduced with Majority Leader ARMEY a bill to expand the IRA system.

In today's Congressional Daily, the headline is "Kasich Enters IRA plan into Social Security Sweepstakes." This is good news. It goes on to say House Budget Chairman KASICH today floated a plan to use part of the windfall, meaning the surplus in our budget, to establish a government system of individual retirement accounts. This is good news.

H.R. 891 would increase the amount that one could contribute over a period of years from today's maximum of

\$2,000 to \$7,000 annually. It would also increase the salary threshold from today's level to \$110,000, including all Members of the middle class. It would also permit withdrawals for a number of purposes, including medical expenses and education costs, in addition to those already permitted.

This is a good bill. I urge all my colleagues to become cosponsors.

DEMOCRATS WANT TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic leadership in the House and Senate are unveiling the details of legislation today to improve America's public schools. Our plans are in marked contrast to the Republican leadership that continues to stress tuition vouchers and other efforts that will provide less funding for public schools. Last session the Republicans went so far as to advocate abolishing the Department of Education.

Democrats want to give America's towns and cities the ability to reduce class size through hiring an additional 100,000 new qualified teachers. Reducing class size is the best way to raise student achievement, and smaller classes also provide for better discipline.

Democrats also want to address the need for renovations to school buildings and new construction. We will provide tax incentives to help States and local districts accelerate the pace of new construction and renovation.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans do not believe in public education. The Democrats, on the other hand, want the Federal Government to improve America's public schools.

□ 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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