



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 150

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2004

No. 43

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 31, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RAY LAHOOD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

The Reverend Cindy Baskin, Pastor, St. James Episcopal Church, Potomac, Maryland, offered the following prayer: Almighty and everliving God:

You are the source of all wisdom and understanding, the source of all justice and righteousness. By Your gracious will, You have instituted governing bodies on Earth and granted them authority to rule.

We therefore beseech You, as this legislative body gathers this day, to guide and direct these elected representatives, enable them to seek first Your honor and glory in all their deliberations. Keep them ever-mindful of their calling to serve this Nation. Guide them in the ways of righteousness, that they may enact such laws for the welfare of our country, as shall please You.

Help each one, as they struggle for justice and truth, to confront one another without hostility or bitterness. Foster among them a spirit of mutual forbearance and respect. Take away any arrogance, anger, or self-interest, which infecting human hearts creates unnecessary divisions. Break down all walls that separate and empower this House to work together through any

struggles and confusion so that Your purposes on Earth may be accomplished. Guide, we pray, each of these Representatives to perceive what is right and grant each one both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it.

We now commend this body and this Nation into Your merciful care, O Lord, that being guided by Your providence we may dwell secure in Your peace and live to Your honor and glory. 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 gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan 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 with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2443. An act to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2004, to amend various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendments to the bill (H.R. 2443) "An Act to author-

ize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2004, to amend various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LOTT, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. INOUE, Mr. BREAUX, and Mr. WYDEN, and from the Committee on Environment and Public Works: Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. JEFFORDS; to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that pursuant to title VI, section 637 of Public Law 108-199, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People (HELP) Around the Globe Commission:

Michael A. Ledeen of Maryland.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 108-199, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People (HELP) Around the Globe Commission:

Eric G. Postel of Wisconsin.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 104(c)(1)(A) of Public Law 108-199, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program:

William E. Troutt of Tennessee.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND CINDY BASKIN

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

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to welcome here today

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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H1743

Reverend Cindy Baskin from my congressional district, and I want to thank her for delivering a beautiful prayer.

Today, March 31, is the last day of Women's History Month; and I think it is especially fitting that we end this month with a prayer from a woman guest chaplain. I also want to note that our House attending physician, Dr. John Eisold, is a member of Reverend Baskin's congregation; and I thank him for suggesting that Reverend Baskin be here this morning for our opening prayer.

Let me read what members of Reverend Baskin's congregation have said about her: "Cindy serves with strong leadership, inspired vision, and endless energy. She encourages us to use our talents in service to the community, while ministering to the congregation as pastor, priest, and friend."

I thank Reverend Baskin for inspiring us here this morning through her prayer and inspiring us to serve our Nation, our community, and reach out to others in the world. Thank you, Reverend Baskin for being here this morning and opening the House of Representatives.

DEMOCRACY DEMANDS FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND FAIR MEDIA COVERAGE

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, all citizens should be aware that President Bush really has two opponents in his reelection effort: the Democratic nominee and the national media.

Most of the national media minimize or ignore the good news for President Bush, like last week's CBS poll showing him ahead, and magnify every criticism.

That is no surprise. TV coverage of the President is mostly negative. News articles are often slanted, and three of the largest newspapers in America have not endorsed a Republican for President in 50 years.

A recent survey shows that over half of the American people believe that "media stories and reports are often inaccurate."

Voters should insist on getting objective news reports so they can make good decisions. Democracy demands not only freedom of speech but also fair media coverage.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND WORK OF CESAR E. CHAVEZ

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

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's history is filled with heroes who, through personal sacrifice and a strong commitment to their cause, have left a mark upon society.

Today, I am proud to honor the life and accomplishments of the late, tal-

ented union organizer and human rights advocate, Cesar E. Chavez.

Born on March 31, 1927, to a farming family in Yuma, Arizona, Chavez learned early that life is filled with challenges, particularly for those who work the fruit and vegetable fields of this great country.

Those fields nurtured Chavez's desire to create a farm workers union, which we know today as the UFW.

Cesar Chavez brought dignity and respect to the farm workers and became an inspiration and a resource to other people engaged in human rights struggles throughout the world. From 1965 to the 1980s, Chavez worked tirelessly to increase wages as well as public awareness of the plight of migrant workers. Chavez defended the rights of farm workers until his death on April 23, 1993.

Chavez's courage and perseverance continues to be a source of inspiration for me and many others dedicated to the interests of America's working families.

Today, Chavez would have celebrated his 77th birthday. I am proud to celebrate his life and his work. May his spirit and dedication continue to be an inspiration to those engaged in human rights struggles throughout the world.

PUNDITS WEARING POLITICAL BLINDERS

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

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that we are in the midst of an election year. As a matter of fact, judging from the intensity of the campaign so far, one might think that we are at the end of October instead of the end of March.

Part of the reason for this intensity is the news organizations who are captivated not by the issues at hand but by the horse race, who is ahead and who is behind; and reporters and pundits are the ones calling the race. But, clearly, some of these pundits are wearing political blinders, suggesting nothing less than partisan bias.

In mid February, CBS News and The New York Times conducted a poll. That night, Dan Rather rather gleefully reported the results, that the Democratic nominee held a five-point lead over President Bush, on the CBS evening news.

The next CBS News/New York Times poll was conducted and again Dan Rather reported that the Democratic nominee had a one-point lead.

Two weeks after that, a third CBS poll showed President Bush leading the Democratic nominee by three percentage points, and what did Dan Rather report on this poll? Nothing. Not a mention.

I would say that is not quite fair and certainly not balanced.

CELEBRATING THE 87TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY OF VIRGIN ISLANDS FROM DENMARK TO U.S.

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as my beloved U.S. Virgin Islands celebrates the 87th anniversary of the transfer of sovereignty from Denmark to the United States of America.

On March 31, 1917, our American journey began in earnest as we became an official part of the American family. While that journey was predated by a friendship with the United States that began during the Revolutionary War, we are told by our grandmothers that on that spring day long ago there were tears of joy and sadness as they said good-bye to the old and welcomed the new.

Today, we are proud Americans serving in all of its wars, rejoicing at its accomplishments, and working with our brothers and sisters to meet its challenges in health care, education, and social justice.

We have not forgotten, however, our shared history of over 250 years with Denmark as we welcome tourists seeking Caribbean roots, apprentice our children to learn of shared craftsmanship, and share the archival materials we have in common.

Mr. Speaker, the uniqueness of the U.S. Virgin Islands can be found in its relationship to many nations, as it has been a cultural crossroads for people the world over.

Today, on March 31, 2004, we celebrate the roots of our diversity as we celebrate yet another Transfer Day.

LIFETIME SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

(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. Mr. Speaker, only in America is a penny saved a penny taxed. Perhaps that is why we have single-digit savings rates in this country. That is just wrong.

To get America back on the road to savings, today Senator CRAIG THOMAS of Wyoming and I will introduce legislation to create lifetime savings accounts.

In a lifetime savings account, people could save up to \$5,000 a year free from tax on interest earned. Money could be spent for any reason, with no minimum holding period. One could spend this money for a new transmission, school, kids' braces, home improvements, rainy day, or any of their needs, wants, and dreams. You name it. The point is, people will not be taxed for saving.

I am honored to say that Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Bodman will join us at the press conference to share the administration's support of this new proposal. We will be working as a