

civility to politics, and become ambassadors of peace, reconciliation and liberty in a world community.

We praise You and thank You, for Your hopeful dreams You are now planting in the hearts of America's youth, both now and always. 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 Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILDEE 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.

COMBAT MEDIC BADGE

(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, the combat medic badge was first awarded in 1945 to medics who served in combat while in or attached to a combat unit. As times changed, the role of the medic changed with them. In Vietnam, medics served in units, but some also flew in helicopter medical evacuation ambulance units, called medivacs.

DUSTOFF was the call sign that we gave this mission, and they saved nearly a million people during the Vietnam war by flying unarmed onto the battlefield to treat and save our wounded soldiers, most often under fire.

The average DUSTOFF medic treated nearly 2,000 troops in a 1-year tour. Currently, there is no unique way to honor these brave men and women. Although they flew in and out of combat every day, they are not eligible for the combat medic badge, because they were not attached to a combat unit; often the medivac unit was another unit.

And my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN), has legislation to correct this by directing the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines to develop the combat medivac badge. The badge will be awarded to anyone who has served in combat as a pilot or crew member of a helicopter medical evacuation ambulance since 1950.

I urge the body to pass this, give the DUSTOFF veterans the honor they deserve.

UNINSURED AMERICANS

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, almost a quarter of Texans do not have health insurance, and this is the highest rate of uninsured in the United States.

In Dallas alone, the uninsured rate is 25 percent. We all know someone who is living without health insurance. There is a perception that if someone does not have health insurance, it is because they do not work or they are on public assistance.

Over 80 percent of the uninsured workers are workers, and 50 percent of them are full-time workers. Americans who work hard for a living should not have to live without health insurance. These uninsured often face the difficult decision of either ignoring their medical problems or being able to afford food and rent.

Mr. Speaker, the sad truth is that no American family is more than one job change, one corporate cost cut, or one serious illness or an accident away from being uninsured. It is time for this Congress to address this problem with innovative ideas and actions.

GIVING CYNICAL PLOYS A BAD NAME

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, as much as we may hate to admit it, there is no denying that the bald-face, cynical ploy can be as much a part of American politics as shaking hands and kissing babies.

Though cynical ploys are occasionally effective, they are almost never pretty. But, Mr. Speaker, the refusal of the national Democratic leaders to offer constructive proposals to strengthen and preserve the Social Security system is starting to give even cynical ploys a bad name.

After all, the stakes of this debate are not a mere election or two, but are instead a looming fiscal crisis and the retirement security of a generation of American seniors.

President Bush and some Republican congressional candidates ran in 2004 on the issue of retirement security. And the President made Social Security the focus of his first State of the Union after his reelection.

From that day on, Democrat leaders have rejected any effort to begin bipartisan dialogue on reform and have threatened any of their rank-and-file Members from so much as discussing the issue with members of the AARP, let alone Republican Members.

From the outset of this debate, Republicans, led by President Bush, have held a seat at the table open for congressional Democrats. And despite this sincere desire among many Democrats to help, their leaders have demanded unquestioned obedience to their obstructionism.

Just last week, President Bush ended a 60-day tour of our Nation explaining to the American people the problems

facing Social Security and his ideas to help solve those problems. Indeed, he has left open for debate, as we have, any productive reform idea to address the system's funding and benefit structure, personal retirement accounts, and other options.

President Bush and his party are trying to preserve and strengthen Social Security for generations to come, to keep the promise the program originally made to the American people 7 decades ago. And since January, we Republicans have identified the problems and begun this crucial debate by proposing several solution alternatives.

Meanwhile, the Democrats have ignored problems, offered no solutions, and attacked anyone with courage to help. As I said, Mr. Speaker, some cynical ploys work and some do not. But as the retirement security of a generation of future retirees depends on the honest, sincere work we do this year, I think we owe it to them to be a little bit better than that.

So even as Republicans continue our work this month to develop the long-term solutions to Social Security troubles, I once again remind Democrats willing to work with us that their seat at the table will be kept open.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. KUCINICH. With all due respect to my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), Mr. Speaker, the Democrats have been doing right for the American people on social security. We have been holding town hall meetings all over this country. We know and the American people ought to know that Social Security is not going bankrupt, that the President misspoke when he said that there is no Social Security trust fund.

As a matter of fact, the Social Security trustees released a report recently that says that right now the Social Security trust fund has \$1.68 trillion in it; that trust fund will grow to \$6 trillion by the year 2028 without any changes whatsoever; that Social Security is rock solid through the year 2041, according to the Social Security Administration's own actuaries; that Social Security is rock solid through the year 2052, according to the bipartisan Congressional Budget Office.

Yes, both parties ought to come together; but we ought to come together in truth, and we ought to have the President let go about this masquerade about social Security going bankrupt.

What is going bankrupt is a legislative process that fails to stand up for the retirement security of the American people. Forty-seven million Americans rely on Social Security. They have a right to expect that the money is going to be there, and we Democrats will make sure that money will be there for them for generations to come.