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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, in whom we live, move and have our being, send forth Your spirit upon the Members of the House of Representatives today.

As they try to finish the work You have set before them in this 109th Congress, we hope that civil discourse, rightful compromise and mutual learning from one another may produce lasting results for Your people.

And when they take leave of committee staffs and each other for the August break, may all Members find peace awaiting them at home. Together with family and friends, may they enjoy summer days and quiet evenings so their souls are renewed and lasting values are embraced with greater fortitude for the good of all Americans and the future of this Nation.

Lord, we pray for an end of terrorism and an atmosphere of world peace be established to free all people of anxiety and foster better family life and stable communities.

May the Lord go before you to prepare your way. May the Lord be above you with every blessing; and may the Lord carry you safely until you return. For He lives and reigns as Sovereign Lord now and forever.

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

Mr. POE 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.

BORDER SECURITY

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, America cannot be a secure Nation without first having secure borders. Inadequate border security not only opens up America to the abuses of illegal immigration, it also leaves our Nation vulnerable to criminal and even terrorist activity.

House Republicans have taken a strong stance on this issue. Democrats, on the other hand, support the Reid-Kennedy bill, a soft piece of legislation that would do little to discourage the lawlessness that we have encroaching into our Nation. It would require illegal immigrants to pay taxes for only 3 of the 5 years they have been in our country, and would guarantee Social Security benefits to illegals for the time they have been in the country unlawfully.

The Reid-Kennedy bill is just as unjust as it is dangerous. If a current American citizen tried to pay taxes 3 out of every 5 years, he would be put in jail. Why do we extend this privilege to people who aren't even citizens? It is simply ludicrous.

During August, Republicans will hold 21 hearings across the country on immigration. We hope these hearings will help us get a strong border security bill on the President's desk.

EXXONMOBIL PROFITS

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, ExxonMobil profits surged 36 percent to \$10.4 billion in just the last 3 months. That means they made \$1,310 a second in profit. In the 1 minute I have to address this Congress, ExxonMobil will make \$79,080 in profit. In 1 minute they will make more than most hard-working Americans make in a year.

As consumers are being gouged at the pump, Big Oil runs the administration, bringing us war and environmental disaster and economic decline. Oil was at about \$23 a barrel at the start of this administration. Now it is at \$74 a barrel. If this administration goes ahead and attacks Iran, it will go to \$130 a barrel and about \$5 a gallon for gas.

This Congress must do more than genuflect with tax breaks and subsidies to Big Oil. It is time we took the side of the consumers whose budgets are being crushed and mobility being crushed by \$3 a gallon gas. It is time for a 100 percent excess profit tax on the oil companies. That is what my bill, H.R. 2070, does. It will lower the price of gas because it will tax excess profits of oil companies and it won't increase the price of gasoline.

My minute is up, but the oil companies' profits are eternal, unless we stop the price gouging with a 100 percent excess profits tax.

ELIMINATING PREVENTABLE MEDICATION ERRORS

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, a recent study by the Institute of Medicine reported preventable medication errors injure over 1.5 million patients and cost over \$3.5 billion each year. In other studies these costs are even higher. One stated it cost Medicare \$29 billion per year in health care costs.

Medication errors include adverse drug reactions or errors of dosage or

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

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type of medication. A misspelled drug name, illegible handwriting, or if the physician is not aware of a patient's other prescriptions, these can all lead to problems.

Yesterday, the House passed the Health Information Technology Promotion Act to help doctors and hospitals work together to eliminate drug errors. Computerized prescriptions instantaneously give physicians vital information and double-check all prescriptions to put patient safety first.

To learn more about eliminating preventable medication errors, or other ways we can save lives and save money in health care, I would urge my colleagues to visit my Web site at murphy.house.gov.

DO-LESS-THAN-DO-NOTHING CONGRESS LEAVES AGAIN WITHOUT ADDRESSING AMERICA'S PRIORITIES

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, as the Republicans prepare to leave on a 5-week vacation, this Congress is best described as the "do-less-than-do-nothing Congress."

Despite the fact that the minimum wage has not been increased in 9 years, House Republicans refuse to allow a clean vote on the minimum wage, which will prevent 6 million Americans from receiving a much needed pay raise. If Republicans were really interested in raising the minimum wage, they wouldn't attach it to bills they know will never be signed into law.

And despite the fact that Republicans have been critical of border security, they continue to refuse to come to the negotiating table so that we can pass a comprehensive immigration and border security bill into law this year.

And despite the fact that gas prices are once again at record highs, House Republicans have yet to pass a tough price gouging bill into law, and refuse to join us in repealing \$20 billion in tax breaks and subsidies to their friends in Big Oil.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have every reason to be disgusted with this House. It is time we take America in a new direction. The American people want a Congress that works for them.

NATIONAL MOTTO: IN GOD WE TRUST

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, this House has much tradition and history. We start each day every day with a prayer to the Almighty, the Pledge, and the flag is displayed in the center of this House. Above that flag, appropriately so, is the phrase, "In God We Trust."

Fifty years ago this month, President Eisenhower signed legislation de-

claring this to be our national motto. Our great leaders believed in this self-evident truth.

Benjamin Franklin said at the Constitutional Convention, "The longer I live, the more convinced I see this truth, God governs the affairs of men, and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?"

President George Washington, in his first inaugural address said: "It would be improper to omit in this first official act, my fervent supplications to the Almighty Being who rules this universe, who presides in the councils of nations."

And finally, Thomas Jefferson said, "Our liberties are the gift of God."

Mr. Speaker, we must and shall preserve, believe and uphold America's motto, "In God We Trust."

And that's just the way it is.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

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

Ms. SOLIS. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about the Republican leadership and the fact that they are ignoring the needs of millions of Americans who right now are making minimum wage. They haven't seen an increase in over 10 years.

They are holding the pay raise for American workers hostage by adding partisan poison pills that will damage and ruin a clean minimum-wage bill that the Democrats support.

Americans deserve a straight up-or-down vote on increasing the minimum wage for working families, most of whom are women, single head of household with children.

Mr. Speaker, our constituents know that you can't fool them. They know that the Republicans' attempt to pass a minimum-wage bill that includes harmful, unrelated legislation is just not going to pass this House.

Come November, Democrats are going to stand up, and they are going to fight with us, and we are going to take back this House.

I urge all my colleagues to reject the proposed Republican poison bills and allow a clean vote up or down on the minimum-wage bill.

□ 1015

COMMENDING THE U.S. COAST GUARD

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the 1-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, it is appropriate that we remember the valiant service of the U.S. Coast Guard. During our Nation's most destructive

natural disaster, these men and women went above and beyond the call of duty.

The sheer magnitude of the Guard's response was astounding. One-third of its air fleet was deployed in the Gulf region. Six years of search-and-rescue operations were completed in 1 week. More than 33,520 lives were saved.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that these servicemembers were not unaffected bystanders. Sixty-nine percent of Coast Guard members were themselves victims of the hurricane; yet they put their own distress aside to save those in need. These men and women are truly American heroes, despite negative, false reporting by the drive-by media.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

ATTACKING OIL COMPANY PROFITS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Exxon reported its second-highest quarterly profit ever. Net income, \$10 billion, up 36 percent. But they are not the only ones raking in the cash. Shell reported a 40-percent increase in profit. BP, a 30-percent increase. ConocoPhillips, a 65-percent increase in profit.

And whom does this oil industry have to thank? Lee Raymond and his outsized \$400 million retirement package?

No. The oil companies have the Republican Congress to thank for their huge bank accounts. In 2005, the oil and gas companies spent \$86 million lobbying the United States Congress, and they received \$14.5 billion in taxpayer-funded handouts. You cannot get that type of return on Wall Street or in Vegas. \$86 million for lobbying, \$14.5 billion in corporate welfare. So Americans are paying twice, once when they fill up their tanks, and then again on April 15.

We must stop handing out welfare checks to Big Oil. It is high time big oil companies got off the taxpayer dole.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change. And it is time for a new direction.

MEDICARE PHYSICIAN PAYMENT HEARING

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, maybe it is because I am also a physician, but one of the questions I get most frequently at town hall meetings or just after the town hall meeting is: How come I turned 65 and I have got to change doctors?

The reason, Mr. Speaker, is because we are relying on a formula, a 10-year-old formula, a failed formula that does not adequately reimburse physicians'