

## PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your holy name give the glory."

On the whole, Your people of the ancient covenant had a vocation which was very humbling. Others might glory in their fading riches or give glory to their ancestors, but Your faith-filled ones were to give You the glory, for they had placed all their trust in You.

Today, Lord, give this Nation renewed faith and build the foundation for continued hope in You.

May the Members of the 109th Congress each narrate a thanksgiving story and give you the glory for what You have accomplished in and through them.

May they complete their work under Your guidance and be a consolation to Your people, and give glory to Your holy name, both now and forever. 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 York (Mr. McNULTY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. McNULTY 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.

REMEMBERING USMC MAJOR  
TRANE McCLOUD

(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, I rise today with great sadness in my heart. Sunday afternoon, Marine Corps Major Trane McCloud was killed in a helicopter accident in Iraq. He and three other marines gave their lives for others to survive.

Major McCloud was a marine's marine. He epitomized the Marine motto, Semper Fidelis, Always Faithful. I was fortunate enough to know and work with Major McCloud during 2003 when he served as a Military Fellow in the Washington office of South Carolina's Second Congressional District. After completing his fellowship, Trane kept in touch with the staff and me, remaining a close friend of the office and the people of South Carolina.

Major McCloud is survived by his loving wife, Maggie, his three beautiful children, Hayden, Grace and Meghan,

and his parents, Ron McCloud and Roma Anderson. My thoughts and prayers are with them. I hope they will find comfort in knowing Trane truly believed in America and the United States Marine Corps.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will never forget September 11. Semper Fi, Trane McCloud.

## DEMOCRATS PROPOSE SIX INITIATIVES THAT SHOULD GARNER BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

(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, within the first 100 hours of the next Congress, we will have the opportunity to pass six initiatives that should garner bipartisan support.

First, we will increase the minimum wage for the first time in 9 years.

Secondly, we will propose a tough ethics reform bill that finally addresses the link between the politicians and Washington lobbyists.

Third, Democrats will make our Nation safer by implementing the non-partisan 9/11 Commission recommendations.

And we will move our Nation closer to energy independence by investing in critical biofuel research.

Fifth, we will help millions of American families better afford college by cutting the loan interest rates in half.

And finally, Democrats will fill in the doughnut hole so millions of American seniors no longer must choose between their drugs or their groceries.

Within the first 100 hours, we will bring these six bold proposals to the House floor, and I am hopeful that they will be embraced by Democrats and Republicans alike.

## CONGRATULATING THE FLORIDA GATORS ON THEIR SELECTION TO PLAY IN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Florida football team for their deserving selection to play for the national championship against Ohio State.

The Gators had a tremendous season, going 12-1, playing one of the toughest schedules in the Nation, and beating Arkansas to win the SEC championship.

The Florida Gators are excellent representatives of both the university and the great State of Florida in their tenacity, spirit, and desire to succeed. I take great pride in representing the University of Florida and congratulating Coach Urban Meyer and the entire university on this great accomplishment.

I am so confident in a Gator victory that I challenge my colleague from

Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) to a friendly wager. In the unlikely event that Florida loses, I will provide her with a crate of Florida oranges. However, I look forward to collecting perhaps one of Ohio's great delicacies. Go Gators.

## COLLEGE LOAN INTEREST RATE CUTS

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, the cost of higher education in our country has been skyrocketing for far too long. And this year alone, the Republicans raised the student loan interest rates by up to 7 percent and cut \$12 billion out of the higher education budget to pay for their tax cuts for the wealthy. Their policy of prioritizing the wealthiest 1 percent over average American families has backfired.

Last month the American voters said "enough is enough" and voted for a Democratic majority in the Congress, after Democrats offered students and their families an end to the rise in student loan interest rates. We ran on a platform that makes higher education one of our top priorities.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats will keep their promise to the American people. Within the first 100 hours of taking office in the next Congress, the Democrats will broaden college opportunities for all students because we believe if you want to go to college, we want to help you get there.

Democrats will work hard to make a college education possible for all who want it here in the United States.

HONORING SERGEANT MITCHEL  
THOMAS MUTZ

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

Ms. SEKULA GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sergeant Mitchel Thomas Mutz who was killed while defending our Nation on November 15, 2006, in Iraq.

Sergeant Mutz was on his second tour of duty in Iraq, rendering faithful, conscientious service to the United States Army and to the people of the United States of America. Sergeant Mutz will be remembered for his commendable service and the dedication he had to this great Nation.

Sergeant Mutz was 23 years old. He was a native of Falls City, Texas, and the loving son of Bobby and Dixie Mutz, brother of Nathan and his wife, Shawna, and the grandson of Elizabeth Mutz.

Mr. Mutz faithfully served our Nation in the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas.

He is from the area where I was born. And when I was home for Thanksgiving, that Saturday, my husband and

I joined the procession of watching where the coffin and the family proceeded through the small town of Poth, Texas, and the people turned out in droves to pay their respects to the family. Veterans, firefighters, law enforcement, patriot guard riders, teachers, farmers and just regular citizens did the best that they could to reduce the pain of Mr. Mutz's family.

Our thoughts, our prayers, and our love go out to the family, as well as to all of the soldiers and our servicemen and women who are protecting our great country. We love you and we respect you.

#### A TIME FOR HEALING

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, the election is over. We need to come together. There needs to be a healing process for all of us in both parties; and I can think of no better subject, and there was an article in 2004, in the summer, in New York magazine. The title of that article was "Fallout 3 years after the World Trade Center attacks. Thousands of cops, firefighters, people who work and lived near the 9/11 disaster have fallen sick and fallen ill."

The EPA just a short time after that disaster said all was clear. The air was fit to breathe. The water was sufficient to drink. It contained, in that disaster, glass shards, pulverized concrete, many carcinogens, including hundreds of thousands of pounds of asbestos. It contained benzene.

There are many people who have been hurt. If you expose a person to this amount of lead, cadmium, benzene, asbestos, they are going to get sick.

We fill potholes in Baghdad. We have forgotten our own first responders.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WAKE FOREST DEMON DEACON FOOTBALL TEAM

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Wake Forest Demon Deacon football team on winning the 2006 ACC championship, the team's first since 1970. Formerly known as a basketball school and picked to finish last in their division in August, Wake Forest finished the season with its best record since 1940, 11-2, after beating Georgia Tech in the ACC championship game on Saturday.

Despite suffering injuries to several key players early in the season, the Demon Deacons bounced back and shocked the Nation with their determination and will to win. Jim Grobe, who has been named ACC Coach of the Year, and heads the ballot for National Coach of the Year, led the team to victory after victory with good old-fashioned coaching, a smart offense and a tenacious defense.

With just 36,000 living undergraduate alumni, Wake Forest has developed an athletic program that rivals the biggest and most storied programs in the country. Long known as an academic powerhouse, the Demon Deacons have proven their dominance on the football field and will travel to Miami on January 2 to face the Louisville Cardinals in the BCS Orange Bowl.

I stand alongside all Wake fans when I say congratulations and wish the Deacons the best of luck in Miami. Go Deacs.

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#### NEED TO TAKE IRAQ WAR IN A NEW DIRECTION

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the bipartisan Iraq Study Group is scheduled to release its recommendations on how best to proceed with the war in Iraq. While the group is led by one of the Bush family's closest friends, it has not actually given, I think, notice or great recommendations.

This does not bode well for change in Iraq. It is time for Bush to face reality. His Democratic experiment in Iraq has been an utter disaster, one that has destabilized even further the Middle East. Last month the American people sent a strong message to the President that they want change in Iraq, that staying the current course is simply not acceptable, but President Bush seems unwilling to listen.

The Iraq Study Group is expected to call for the redeployment of American troops out of Iraq by 2008. Finally, a bipartisan group of leaders are joining us in our calls for a phased redeployment out of Iraq. This report should serve, I hope, as a wake-up call to the Bush administration that Democrats and Republicans alike are calling for change.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 1 minute.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California is recognized.

There was no objection.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just say to the gentlewoman who just spoke that it is appropriate when referring to the President of the United States be he Democrat or Republican to refer to him as the President. Thank you.

#### DEMOCRATS INTRODUCE A BOLD AGENDA THAT INCLUDES ALL AMERICANS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, within the first 100 hours of the new Democratic Congress, we will accomplish more than the Republican do-nothing

Congress accomplished this entire year. While Republicans refuse to break their questionable cosy relationships with lobbyists, Democrats will pass an ethics reform bill that will once again make this the people's House, not the lobbyists' House. While Republicans refuse to expand economic opportunities to millions of Americans, Democrats will give minimum-wage workers their first raise in 9 years.

While Republicans refuse to go after price gouging oil companies, Democrats will begin the process of making our Nation energy independent by repealing needless tax breaks for Big Oil, and instead putting that money towards crucial funding of biofuel research.

While Republicans refused to help millions of seniors who fell into the prescription drug doughnut hole, Democrats will allow the Federal Government to negotiate lower drug prices so that the doughnut hole can be filled. These are all important initiatives that Democrats will pass within the first 100 hours of the next Congress.

#### LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE ON ENGLISH

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, in the small town of Friendswood, Texas, a citizen tried to discuss a water problem with a city worker. Apparently the worker could not be of assistance because the worker did not speak English.

This led City Council to consider a ballot vote by citizens to determine if English should be the official language of their town. City Council Member Chris Perden said, "English as an official language gives us a baseline. The city will publish everything in English. Our meetings will be in English . . . and city forms will be in English." There are even suggestions that all city employees be required to speak English and even teach those that cannot. The critics quickly surfaced, however, and LULAC officials say they will sue, claiming violation of civil rights if the public supports this ordinance.

This is yet another example of how small-town America must solve immigration issues that the Federal Government has not honestly addressed. The people of Friendswood, Texas, not the politicians, not the self-promoters and not even LULAC, should have the right to vote and decide if English should be the official language of their town.

And that's just the way it is.

#### CONGRATULATING DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL COUGARS, MICHIGAN DIVISION 1 FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

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

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer sincere congratulations to the Dakota High