



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2007

No. 162

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Reverend Allen Novotny, Gonzaga College High School, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Lord, we gather here this morning, representatives of millions, to use Your gifts of the power of words, of debate and of laws to serve their needs. Yet, we dare ask for even more, the awesome power of Your Spirit.

And so we pray, rush upon us, O Spirit of God. From this time, rush upon us: like living water, like leaping fire, like fresh wind through an open window.

For this time, rush upon us, O Holy Spirit: with wisdom and knowledge, with understanding and counsel, with wonder and with recognition and awe. Just in time, rush upon us, O Spirit of God: in life-giving words, in songs for the powerless, in a passion for service. At this time, rush upon us, O Holy Spirit: this hopeful time, this planning time, this renewing time, this new time, this full time, all the time. Rush upon us, O Spirit of God.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIREs) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SIREs 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

THE COST OF THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the Congressional Budget Office just released an analysis that on top of the half a trillion dollars that we have already spent on the war in Iraq, it will cost us another \$2 trillion over the next decade. That includes \$564 million of interest, because every dime of this war in Iraq has been borrowed, from our children and from our grandchildren. It will come to a greater cost than the cost of the Korean, the Vietnam War and all three theaters of operation in World War II. It boils down to about \$7,000 for every man, woman and child.

And here we thought the only real sacrifice was being borne by our soldiers and their families. We are beginning to see the real implications for all of America. In fact, just last week, the President vetoed a bill that would have cost \$35 billion but would have provided health care to 10 million children over the next 5 years and at the same time demanded that we instead spend that same amount of money for 3 weeks in Iraq. This is not what America expects from its President or its Congress, Madam Speaker.

VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

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

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, last week on ABC's news program, Charlie Gibson

announced the news in Iraq. He said, "The news is, there isn't any news." That's right. Across all of Iraq, there were no fatalities, shootings and bombs going off. As the media has started to recognize that we have turned the corner and are winning the war in Iraq, this pressing question, once again, comes before the House, and that is, what are the Democrats going to do with the bill that we have already passed and that the Senate has already passed to provide money for our veterans?

Eighteen million dollars every day is being wasted for the last 130 days because we won't bring this veterans funding bill back for final approval. It has the votes. What are we waiting for, post-traumatic stress syndrome? Veterans hospitals? Veterans clinics? We have to ask the Democrat leadership why a 130-day wait.

It's time for us to fund our veterans.

HONORING GALESBURG, ILLINOIS

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor to my hometown, the city of Galesburg, IL, for publicly speaking out against hate crimes. Galesburg has a rich tradition of promoting equality for all of its citizens. It was a stop on the Underground Railroad and home to the first anti-slavery society in the State of Illinois.

Mayor Gary Smith recently declared October Not in Our Town Month, an effort to combat violent, bias-motivated crimes designed to cause fear and intimidation among an entire group of people.

The Not in Our Town Month proclamation states, "Hate groups shall not divide communities." It also urges the residents of Galesburg to "join together to eliminate racism and violence and to declare that respect,

□ 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.

H11937

equality and freedom for all people be our goal.”

Crimes based on prejudice are a poor reflection on our communities, and I congratulate Galesburg for refusing to stand by in silence.

VETERANS FUNDING

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

Mr. STEARNS. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

My colleagues, the House passed the largest increase in veterans funding in the 77-year history of the Veterans Affairs Department. The bill provides more than \$37 billion for veterans programs. This is a \$4.4 billion increase over last year. As pointed out earlier, it has been over 130 days since the House passed the VA/Military Construction funding. Yet they have refused to appoint conferees like the Senate, their counterparts, have already done. So at this point the bill can't move forward and be signed by the President.

By the Democrats' failure to move forward on this bill, veterans are losing out on \$600 million for posttraumatic stress disorder care, traumatic brain injury research and care; \$4.1 billion to improve VA facilities, hospitals and clinics; and, lastly, \$480 million for prosthetic research to help our wounded veterans retain a positive quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, we urge our Democrat colleagues to move forward on this bill and have it to the President so he can sign it on Veterans Day.

NATURAL DISASTERS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Our hearts go out to the almost million people forced to flee their homes from wildfires in Southern California. At the same time a drought has gripped North Carolina and Georgia which in the long run may be end up being as devastating.

These disasters are almost unimaginable, except we've been there before, like in Southern California in 2003. And two-thirds of the new development in the last 10 years in Southern California has been in areas we know are subject to wildfire. What are we going to do about it?

The administration's refusal to deal meaningfully with global warming is the most glaring example of behaviors that doom us to reruns for years to come. Georgia has no real plan to deal with its water and doesn't even know what supplies it can count upon. Here in Congress, we fail to prioritize the right infrastructure and give billions of dollars for relief after a disaster and won't spend millions to invest in programs to protect before it happens.

I hope and pray that the message sinks in and that we use this disaster

as a wake-up call to get our act together to help people before these things happen to save both lives and money in the future.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to express on behalf of California's congressional delegation our appreciation to our colleagues here in the House of Representatives and to the administration, President Bush and Secretary Chertoff and Director Paulison and others in the administration who are at this moment on the ground in Southern California, and to the courageous firefighters and Governor Schwarzenegger and his entire team for all that is being done to deal with what has been described by one battalion chief in San Diego, California, as the worst fire that the State has ever faced. Last night, Brian Williams of NBC News said that the fact that nearly a million people have been evacuated from their homes means that this is the largest movement of people since the Civil War.

We are going to go through some very difficult and challenging days ahead, and to the firefighters, to those who have suffered losses, our thoughts and prayers are with you. And again my appreciation to our colleagues who represent States across this country, North Carolina, Wyoming, Arizona, Idaho, States all across this country, Mr. Speaker, that have stepped up to the plate to help us. I also want to express my appreciation to Speaker PELOSI as well.

CHIP

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, the bipartisan CHIP Reauthorization Act had the support of over two-thirds of the U.S. Senate, nearly every U.S. Governor, and an overwhelming majority of the American people. Unfortunately, it did not have the support of two crucial parties, President Bush who vetoed it and his Republican friends who voted to uphold his veto.

Instead of helping us extend health care to low-income children, the President claims this fully-paid-for bill is excessive spending and instead he proposes to spend just \$5 billion more than we do now on the CHIP program. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the President's plan will lead to more than 800,000 children losing their coverage.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know how the President and his Republican enablers would determine which 800,000 children lose their coverage. And what do they tell the 4 million children who are currently eligible for CHIP, but

will have no hope of getting this coverage unless our bipartisan bill passes? It is time for Republicans in this body to reject the President's plan to cut health care for children and stand with us in strengthening the CHIP program.

□ 1015

COMBATING THE EMERALD ASH BORER

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

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and urge my colleagues to join with me and our colleague Mr. KIRK in cosponsoring H.R. 3901, the Emerald Ash Borer Municipality Assistance Act.

What is an emerald ash borer, you may ask. Well, it is a nasty little bug that has found its way on to our shores, which has a very aggressive disposition towards ash trees in particular. It is a native of China, and there are no known natural predators here in the United States.

If you think of the districts that we all represent, many of them have beautiful canopies of trees that line our streets and create wonderful natural ways all throughout our districts. Yet this bug has shown up in Illinois, my State; Indiana; Michigan; Ohio; Pennsylvania; Maryland and West Virginia.

As one researcher of the Morton Arboretum, which I represent, said, "The emerald ash borer doesn't just kill a majority of the ash trees it encounters; it seems to kill them all."

This legislation creates a revolving loan fund whereby municipalities have access to those moneys, and they use it in order to take on this scourge.

PROVIDING HEALTH CARE FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICAN CHILDREN

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, last week 10 million children were denied health insurance because some of my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle chose to stand with President Bush over the children.

It is disappointing that some of our colleagues stood with the President and stood with the smoke-and-mirrors campaign to distort what the SCHIP legislation was. But this is not the end; it is only the beginning of the effort of this Congress to stand with American families to protect health care for our children.

Democrats in this body, along with 68 Members of the Senate and 43 of our Nation's Governors and over 80 percent of the American public want this piece of legislation to move. We are committed to ensuring that States have the resources and flexibility necessary to enroll these children.

Mr. Speaker, the American people, Governors and many Members of Congress, both Democrat and Republican,