

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: God of the founders of this Nation, who has shown us mercy throughout our history, be attentive to Your people and our needs today. In Your wisdom, You have established us as stewards of creation. Guide the Members of Congress and all citizens of this great land in their work today.

May the dignity of their enterprise bear results, which will unite Your people and bring about a prosperity that will embrace the least in our midst and reveal the generosity of those richly endowed so to give You ever greater glory, 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 her approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HARE 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.

ECONOMY AND EFFORTS TO PASS SECOND ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

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

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, with thousands of Americans losing their homes and jobs, skyrocketing costs for basic items such as gas prices at an all-time high, Americans everywhere are feeling the negative impact of these failed economic policies that we are living under.

Congress has already enacted an economic stimulus package that will provide relief to families in need. Last week, House Democrats called on President Bush to again work in a bipartisan manner on a second stimulus package, one that would help our economy get back on track.

House Democrats are also working on legislation to help 1.5 million American families to avoid foreclosure. This legislation goes further than the President's plan to help only 100,000 homeowners. This one goes to 1.5 million.

Congressional Democrats are proposing strong initiatives that will help stabilize the housing market and help jump-start an economy that is simply leaving just too many people behind.

THE PELOSI RECESSION

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, taxes are a function of spending. If you spend more, you must tax more.

The spending budget we passed previously is predicated on the largest tax increase in American history. Tax increases are coming to all Americans. Tax increases are on autopilot.

Without even a vote, tax levels are going to snap back up to the old levels, the levels that existed before the 2001 and 2003 tax reductions. In other words, doing nothing is doing something.

One of the reasons for the uncertainty in the market is because people know these tax increases are coming. All marginal income tax rates will increase, capital gains rates will increase, the marriage tax penalty will come back, the child tax credit will decrease, the death tax will jump back up to 55 percent. This will hurt the economy.

The Democratic leaders have blocked free trade with Colombia, they have blocked efforts to produce more oil and natural gas resources, they have blocked lower taxes. All this will hurt the economy.

People are beginning to call this the Pelosi recession. Maybe they are right.

HONORING EVA GEIRINGER SCHLOSS

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

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Eva Geiringer Schloss for her efforts to educate our Nation about the evils of racism and hate.

Eva was born in Austria in 1929. When the Nazis invaded, she and her family went into hiding in Amsterdam until they were arrested on Eva's 15th birthday.

Eva was sent to Auschwitz, where she endured the daily degradation of the concentration camp that robbed so many of their lives. Eva's father and brother were killed in the Holocaust. She and her mother were liberated by the Russian army.

Eva Geiringer Schloss has traveled throughout the United States educating thousands of people about the dangers of unchecked prejudice and hate. A play based on Eva's life entitled "And Then They Came for Me" has been presented all over the country and will be performed in my district to mark the Holocaust Remembrance.

It is my honor to recognize Eva, a courageous woman who endured unimaginable brutality and has dedicated her life to fighting injustice.

HONORING RIC FLAIR

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

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor the career of a man

whom I am proud to call both a constituent and a friend.

Ric Flair's professional wrestling career of 36 years, in which he entertained millions of people around the world, recently came to a close. He will be forever known as an innovator, a pioneer, and, perhaps, the greatest that his industry has ever seen. By any standard, Ric Flair is a living legend.

He is recognized all over the world, but he calls Charlotte, North Carolina, home. On his way to being named a record 16-time world champion, he became famous for his bleached blond hair, his designer suits, and his charismatic on-stage persona, while dishing out his trademark chops, and, of course, the dreaded Figure Four Leglock.

On March 29, 2008, Ric Flair became the first active wrestler to be ever inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame. Often imitated, but never duplicated, his legacy will forever be synonymous with the world of professional wrestling. He is a fixture at Carolina Hurricanes games and Panthers games in our State. The joy and emotion that Ric Flair's very presence evokes will continue on for a very, very long time.

Today I honor the career of Nature Boy and congratulate Charlotte's favorite son, Ric Flair.

Woooo!

TAX BENEFITS AND RELIEFS

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

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, today is the dreaded April 15, and I, like millions and millions of Americans, have filed my returns and those for my mother and others.

This Congress has tried to provide and has provided relief for middle-class taxpayers and middle-income taxpayers and extended those tax benefits. We have also passed relief for the people who pay the alternative minimum tax.

But with the stimulus package, we provide moneys for people to get a refund. But to get that refund, people have to file their taxes. Be sure and file your taxes, and if your income is \$75,000 or less or \$150,000 for a couple, you can get your stimulus relief package passed by this Congress.

We wish our moneys weren't going to rebuild Baghdad and for war efforts, but with the work of this Congress, one day we will have peace, we won't be spending the money in Baghdad, and we will be spending the money in America to rebuild our infrastructure.

THE WASHINGTON ELITES

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

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the Washington elites are trying to rule the land like a monarchy, claiming they know

best for what they consider the peasants in the vast rural areas.

Those elitists grew up in privilege and look down on the rest of the country. The elitists in the imperial kingdom of Washington, DC feel it's their privileged right and obligation to make the peasants happier because those rural Americans don't know how to take care of themselves.

Well, let me tell you the truth about those peasants. These great Americans don't look to Washington or the elites or the monarchy for their happiness. They find their happiness in their individuality. The folks that I represent in southeast Texas are patriotic citizens, many from small-town rural America.

They love their families and are proud of America. They are honest, hard-working independent citizens who, when duty calls, go off to war to defend this Nation. They attend church on Sunday, and if they don't attend, they still feel strongly about their religion.

They believe they have the personal right to bear arms. They are not bitter about life, but they are generally happy. They are not in need of big government coming in in the name of hope and change to control more of their lives.

Those in Washington would do well to remember that the salt of the Earth lives in small-town America. Government should keep out of their way, instead of interfering with their lives, their faith, and their right to bear arms.

And that's just the way it is.

BIG OIL

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, JOHN MCCAIN, has a solution to skyrocketing gas prices.

Is he going to take on Big Oil, their price gouging, and their obscene profits? No. Is he going to take on OPEC and their collusion to restrict supply and drive up the price in violation of international trade law? No.

Is he going to take on the hedge fund speculators on Wall Street that are driving up the price unnecessarily 50 cents a gallon so then they can make money? No.

He is going to be the GOP nominee, the Grand Oil Party nominee. He can't take that money. He has a solution. Suspend the Federal gas tax.

In 1993, the Federal gas tax was 18.3 cents and a gallon of gas was a buck. In 2008, a gallon of gas is \$3.50. The Federal gas tax is the same 18.3 cents. It's dropped to 5 percent of the cost.

If we follow his plan, we will cancel hundreds of needed bridge projects and highway projects across the country, throwing construction workers out of jobs, an already hard-hit sector, or maybe he is just going to borrow the money after he cancels the gas tax, be-

cause the only thing going up faster on the Republican administration than the price of gas is the national debt.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

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

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, this week is National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

This Congress should be working to make our cities, our streets, our States, our Nation safer for crime victims instead of talking about things like beaches and protecting union bosses.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children was created 10 years ago, and this is about to expire in a few months.

Let me tell you, having spent 21 years on the bench, I probably tried 250 to 300 aggravated sexual assault cases. One was an adult, the balance were children.

This is epidemic in this country. It's time for this Congress to get on board and work on the Internet Sex Offender Prohibition Act, which would punish people for using the Internet to find victims for their sexual offenses as child predators and would increase and enhance the punishment for those crimes.

This is important work. This is work this Congress needs to do to protect our children and make our streets safe.

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS IS FIGHTING TO MAKE THE TAX CODE FAIR AND PRO-FAMILY

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, as millions of middle-class Americans rush to the post office tonight to drop their tax forms in the mail, this Democratic Congress is fighting to make the Tax Code fair and pro-family.

Already this year we passed a budget that makes middle-class tax relief a priority. Our budget calls for extending middle-income tax cuts, including child tax credit, marriage penalty relief and 10 percent tax bracket.

Rather than supporting our budget, President Bush and congressional Republicans continue to push permanent tax cuts for multimillionaires. For 7 years now, President Bush's tax policy has disproportionately benefited the wealthiest few in our Nation.

Consider that the average millionaire is being given \$120,000 in tax breaks on their 2007 taxes, while middle-income taxpayers are, on average, receiving only about \$740.

As the income gap between the wealthy and the middle class continues to grow, we should prioritize middle-class tax cuts. If Congressional Repub-

licans are serious about providing continued relief to the middle class, they should support our final budget proposal.

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MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, congressional Democrats are prioritizing tax cuts for the middle class. Our budget made clear that we intend to extend and pay for the Bush tax cuts that directly impact middle class families.

In fact, the Democratic budget identifies the specific tax cuts that we would like to see extended, such as: marriage penalty relief; the 10 percent lower income bracket; the child tax credit; small business expensing; and the R&D tax credit.

But like our fiscally irresponsible colleagues who advocate a continuation of this administration's failed economic policies, the Democratic budget achieves balance in 4 years and ensures that any increased spending or decreased revenue must be offset by comparable budget cuts.

Rather than just charging the cost to the national credit card and increasing our indebtedness to foreign nations like China and Japan, Democrats want to go in a new direction by ensuring that our budgets are balanced and our Tax Code is fair for all Americans.

AMERICANS ASK: WHY IS BUSH SPENDING BILLIONS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. SIREs. Madam Speaker, on Tax Day, Americans have a right to ask why the Bush administration continues to spend taxpayer dollars on an Iraq war that has no end in sight and no plans for success.

Today, President Bush will spend more than \$338 million in Iraq. What exactly does that mean for the taxpayer sending in his or her form today? The typical taxpayer covers the cost of the war in Iraq for only one-half a second.

And while we continue to ship billions of dollars to Iraq while our economy is going south and our budget deficit continues to hit record highs every year, the Iraqi government currently has a surplus and is expecting to receive \$40 billion this year in oil revenues. Can someone please make sense of this policy?

Madam Speaker, the American taxpayer has every right to demand more accountability from Washington. Congressional Democrats continue to propose a change in policy, one that shifts more responsibility to the Iraqis themselves. They can certainly afford it. Unfortunately, President Bush and his supporters in Congress ignore the