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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

In the waning days of this 112th Congress, we ask Your blessing, O Lord, upon the Members of this people's House, and most especially upon the leadership. It is on their shoulders the most important negotiations of our time have been placed.

They have been entrusted by their fellow Americans with the awesome privilege and responsibility of sustaining the great experiment of democratic self-government. Give them wisdom, grace, insight, and courage to forge an agreement that allows us all to move forward toward an encouraging future.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

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 Arkansas (Mr. WOMACK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WOMACK 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 five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

COMMENDATION FOR GOVERNOR HASLAM'S BUSINESS DECISION

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

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Governor Bill Haslam of my home State of Tennessee for his decision not to set up a State-run health care exchange. Governor Haslam was exactly right when he said this was a business decision, not a political one.

After 2 years, the Obama administration has failed to provide States with sufficient guidance as to how State exchanges would function, yet President Obama expects States to make that decision this week. That's like asking a business to sign a contract that is still being written.

Further, there is evidence that the Federal Government will ultimately control exchanges no matter who creates them. The only difference is if a State sets up an exchange, it will pay for it. No business would take a deal like that.

Finally, Tennessee has seen what experimental health care reform looks like in TennCare. This program almost collapsed and bankrupted our State. What business would risk its finances on a proposal modeled after a failed plan?

I applaud Governor Haslam and thank him for his business-like approach.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL FISCAL CLIFF

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

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise because whether you call it a fiscal cliff or a slope, there's no denying the environmental wreckage hitting a metaphoric ledge will have.

Under the sequester, the National Park Service would likely have to close national parks, campgrounds, and visitor centers. Under the sequester, widespread rural job loss, weaker wild-fire management, closure of trails and campgrounds, poor maintenance of forest roads, unprocessed recreational permits, and greater invasive species growth is forecasted.

Under the sequester, \$148 million would be taken away from the U.S. Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy program, which would be equivalent to cutting the solar energy program in half or equal to eliminating the entire wind and geothermal energy programs.

Fiscal cliff or slope, the environment knows no difference. We must act and act now.

IN TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S LONGEST-SERVING MAYOR, HILMAR MOORE OF RICHMOND, TEXAS

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the legendary mayor of Richmond, Texas, Hilmar Moore.

Mayor Moore passed away last week after 63 years as Richmond's mayor. He was a true Texan, a straight shooter who loved his family, good conversations, quail hunting, ranching, and Texas Longhorn football.

The last time I talked with Mayor Moore was Richmond's 175th anniversary. My speech was interrupted by trains rolling by. The trains did not dare to interrupt Mayor Moore. I asked him, "How can I do that?" He said, "Give it time. Give it time."

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

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